

Australia's favourite travel news magazine

Traveltalk

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JOBKEEPER

Agents plea for survival lifeline

WINE & WELLNESS

Win trips to Italy and Thailand

DOMESTIC TOURISM

5 must-do's in Kakadu

Travel bubbles

Everything you need to know

We're all in this
Traveltalk
TOGETHER

Plus: Aussie celebs back road trip pledge

EDITORIAL

Jon Underwood

Managing Editor (print)

Email: jon@traveltalkmag.com.au

Gaya Avery

Managing Editor (digital)

Email: editorial@traveltalkmag.com.au

Rebecca Lawson

Sub Editor

EDITORIAL CONTRIBUTOR

Jamie Shostak

ART DIRECTOR

Vanessa Pribil

Email: production@traveltalkmag.com.au

ADVERTISING

Sydney: **Mal Jenkins**

Advertising Sales Manager

Mobile: 0434 377 432

Email: mal@traveltalkmag.com.au

Sydney: **Jenny Rowland**

Mobile: 0414 746 146

Fax: (02) 9969 3390

Email: jenny@traveltalkmag.com.au

Perth: **Debbie Sproule**

Tel: (08) 6406 1358

Mobile: 0403 833 295

Email: debbie@traveltalkmag.com.au

DIRECTORS AND ASSOCIATE PUBLISHERS

Jenny Rowland (Sydney)

Debbie Sproule (Perth)

Perth Office:

PO Box 3104 Kingsley WA 6026

DISTRIBUTION AND SUBSCRIPTIONS

Tel: (08) 6406 1358

Email: distribution@traveltalkmag.com.au

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COVER IMAGE:

Lucky Bay, Esperance, WA. Photo courtesy Jarrad Seng

Living in limbo land

I MADE a disturbing observation in my local supermarket at the weekend.

Turning the corner to the toilet roll aisle, I was confronted by near empty shelves. Yet in front of me was a lady with two 28-packs in her trolley and she was proceeding to try and cram a couple of eight-packs in there as well.

I gave her my best disdainful look and went on my way.

Apparently the supermarket in question had only just abandoned its limit on toilet roll purchases, so the lady in question was doing nothing wrong. But to me it just served to support the fact that we Australians are currently living in limbo land.

We've been incredibly 'fortunate' in terms of COVID-19 deaths when compared to other countries. With the relaxing of self-isolation guidelines and state borders re-opening, we could be excused for thinking that the worst might be over.

But the spike in cases in Victoria, combined with multiple new outbreaks around the world, means the future is still extremely uncertain. We don't want to return to the situation we've just endured, but we're not sure just how to proceed: hence limbo land.

It's understandably confusing to know just what we should or shouldn't be doing. Our elite sportsmen can

be seen bashing the living daylight out of each other on the weekends, yet we're told to still maintain our distance from others. Our kids are back at school, yet they're not supposed to use public transport.

It seems there are a lot of mixed messages out there and everyone is anxiously waiting to see just what is around the corona corner.

For the travel industry, the future is equally unclear. Domestic tourism is being heavily promoted and Australians are starting to think about a backyard holiday. Yet international travel – which is the lifeblood of most travel agents – seems a long way off, particularly when Qantas boss Alan Joyce says it will be next July before we can fly overseas again.

While we can only hope that's a worst case scenario, it is imperative that the government considers extending the Jobkeeper program for the travel industry.

Traveltalk has and will continue to support calls for an extension into 2021 so that agents and those working in the travel industry have a future to come back to.

In this issue we've dedicated several pages to those who are leading various campaigns to seek a Jobkeeper extension. We can only hope that the government listens so we can all take a well-earned holiday from limbo land.

Sand Dunes, Port Stephens. Photo courtesy Destination NSW.



GET YOUR IRISH GROUP ON

TOURISM IRELAND has launched a private group on Facebook to encourage agents to learn more about the island of Ireland.

The 'Ireland Insiders' group gives agents access to all they need to know to sell the destination successfully.

Tourism Ireland will use the facility to share information about upcoming events, as well as product updates, trade industry discounts and fam trip details.

■ To join, head to: bit.ly/3ehPrCR



New library opens just for your use

VIKING HAS launched a new and improved image library for agents, featuring an extensive range of more than 350 images.

The easy-to-navigate library is designed to provide agents with a valuable resource when developing their Viking marketing activity.

The facility covers the entire Viking fleet of river, ocean and expedition ships, providing easy access to both interior and exterior photographs – including renders of new ships: *Viking Mississippi* and the line's two expedition ships, *Viking Octantis* and *Viking Polaris*, currently under construction and launching in 2022.

Agents will also find a range of destination and on-shore imagery that relate to each of the company's different itineraries and experiences on the ground – from the Arctic to the Antarctic, Mississippi, Scandinavia, Europe and Australia & New Zealand, as well as logos in a range of formats.

In addition, there are video assets available to download at the Marketing Centre to support social media marketing.

■ myvikingjourney.com/agent



FIJIAN OFFER TO TREASURE

TREASURE ISLAND Resort & Spa in Fiji has launched a new self-famil program allowing agents to enjoy a discounted stay.

The incentive offers a three-night stay in a run of house bure for FJD\$399 (approx. \$AU266) for both the agent and a companion. Valid until June 30, 2021, the price also includes breakfast and return boat transfers.

"Even travel agents need a holiday so this is the perfect opportunity to take a relaxing break from it all," said Richard Skewes, Australian Marketing Manager at Precise Travel Marketing.

"With children options also available this could be the perfect affordable break for couples, friends or families."

■ For details, contact Richard on richard@ptm.net.au

GOURMET TRIP FOR TWO UP FOR GRABS

ORMINA TOURS is giving away a three-day gourmet food and wine tour in Italy for two people.

Agents and their clients are being encouraged to enter the promotion, staged in conjunction with The Grand Wine Tour.

Valid throughout 2021, the prize enables the winner to choose from one of four itineraries discovering some of Italy's most prestigious wine regions, Piedmont, Veneto, Campania or Marche.

The prize also includes great accommodation, a range of exquisite meals,

private driver in a deluxe Mercedes vehicle, as well as wine tastings and behind the scenes experiences at the region's most exclusive wineries.

To enter, participants should reflect on their past travel experiences and submit an image and accompanying story that outlines a memorable holiday.

The winner will be selected by a panel of Ormina Tours judges after entries close on August 14, with the winner announced on August 28.

■ orminatours.com/win



Fancy a Thai famil?

AGENTS WHO upskill themselves in the wellness sector could be in with a chance of landing a spot on a famil to Thailand next year.

More than 100 agents across Australia have already joined the Health and Fitness Travel and Tourism Authority of Thailand 'Sell Your Way to Wellness' agent famil and incentive program.

"Awesome training module, possibly the best one I have ever done," said Kerrie from italktravel & cruise Bendigo Central in Victoria.

"I have learnt more about wellness in tourism in this online training than I have in the last 27 years!"

The first five agents to complete the training and sell one Health and Fitness Travel Thailand retreat before May 31, 2021 will be awarded a place on the famil, which is planned for July 2021. Two wildcard spots will also be up for grabs.

The lucky winners will receive a bespoke Health and Fitness Travel Fusion Fitness program, return economy flights, private accommodation, spa treatments, private wellness sessions and all meals at the award-winning retreat, Kamalaya in Koh Samui.

"We realise now more than ever how important our health is and there is pent-up demand for travel," said Samantha Lippiatt, Director of Health and Fitness Travel.

"If your clients have dreamed of a wellness holiday but never got around to it, now they will prioritise it."

As an added incentive, the first 10 agents to complete the program and sell seven Health and Fitness Travel Thailand retreats with a minimum of \$3,500 before May 31, 2021 will earn themselves a free retreat at Kamalaya.

■ healthandfitnesstravel.com.au/agent-incentives; amazingthailand.com.au

IN BRIEF///

A-ROSA River Cruises is offering a new training module for agents on the Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA) Australasia Members Hub.

The course has been designed specifically for Australia, providing detailed insight into CLIA's newest river marketing affiliate and its positioning within the European river cruise market.

This is the latest education option hosted in the Hub, re-launched to offer a next-generation education platform in a single, streamlined location.

■ crusing.org.au

CELEBRATE THE PRIZE GUYS

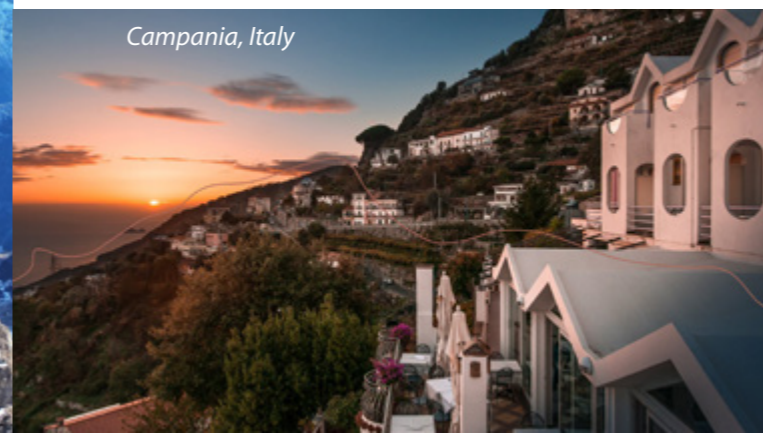
A NUMBER of agents have picked up some quality prizes in a recent promotion run by Switzerland Tourism.

The organisation held a seven-part webinar series on Switzerland where agents were provided updates on key partner regions and crucial product information.

A total of 14 agents achieved top scores during the live session quizzes, winning them one of the Victorinox prizes of a knife set, backpack and toiletry bag.

The winners were: Debbie Andrew, Michelle Woodsford, Jenna Lewis, Kerrie Kaesler, Alivia Philipps, Maree Kinder, Leigh Refugia, Carolyn Schonafinger, Roz Nielson, Selese Rowe, Serena Harden, Shirley Taylor, Helen Niddrie and Caroline Travel.

■ To view the webinars, head to corner.stnet.ch/trade-au/?page_id=1497



Campania, Italy



Agents are using the support and concern of clients, friends and well wishers as motivation to ensure they emerge stronger from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Here, we highlight some of the personal stories we've received from agents who, while doing it tough, have been truly moved by the great Aussie spirit.

IT WAS a simple knock on the door one morning in March that reduced Melanie Carter to tears.

The delivery was of a box of flowers: a gift of encouragement and support from a longstanding client who wanted to express their concern.

"The accompanying card was simple: 'keep your chin up'. I was in floods of tears," said Melanie, a Personal Travel Manager based in Victoria.

"It came at a time when I was at my most overwhelmed and it gave me the strength to continue. The client has been checking in on me regularly and his kindness has been moving."

Similar gestures followed, including an Easter basket laden with gifts for her family and an anonymous card and supermarket gift voucher in her mailbox.

"There have been many messages of support on social media and my clients have been generous with their

testimonials and recommendations – their support has been wonderful."

Queensland-based Chris Ezzy said he has been overwhelmed by the messages of support and concern he has received from clients, family and friends.

"It has been incredibly touching and has motivated me to ensure that I make it through to the other side stronger than ever."

Melanie Whyte reports a similar level of goodwill and generosity being shown in Tasmania.

"Clients have dropped off flowers, wine and chocolates – one client turned up at my house with about three kilos of homemade bolognese, cookies (and cookie dough to make more) and toilet paper!"

Aside from the practical aid they have received, PTMs have also been appreciative of the supportive attitude of their many clients whose travel plans have been frustrated by the pandemic.

"A holiday represents a major investment for many people and my clients have been very patient and

understanding of the time it takes for their refunds to be processed by various suppliers such as airlines and tour operators.

"They also understand that the work involved in unravelling their travel plans yields no revenue for me, but a number of clients have proactively offered to pay me for my efforts. One even offered to make an advance payment for his next holiday to get me 'through the tough times.'"

Michael Gazal, Executive General Manager of TravelManagers, said the company was doing everything it could to provide practical support to its members.

"Our PTMs are all individual business owners, facing their share of challenges in the current economic climate. Every gesture of support, no matter how small, has an impact," he said.

■ travelmanagers.com.au



Melanie Whyte (second from left) accepting the 2019 Avis Scholarship



Melanie Carter, Personal Travel Manager, Victoria

Loyalty does have a value

WHEN IT comes to showing support, plenty of Travellers Choice customers are really putting their money where their mouth is.

Chris Watson Travel in Tamworth in New South Wales received a call from a loyal corporate client to say that instead of giving staff a traditional end-of-financial-year bonus, it had decided to pass out travel vouchers instead.

"They ordered vouchers valued at a total of \$15,000," said owner Chris Watson. "And the only stipulations are that they must be used at our agency and spent to support an Australian destination."

"I was blown away. It just shows that other people, other business operators, understand how COVID-19 is impacting us and that they are thinking about what they can do to support small businesses and the broader travel industry."

Alison Nichols from Middletons Travel in Port Pirie in South Australia was even more surprised when she rang two clients to let them know that a tour package they had booked had been cancelled.

"Instead of asking when they would get their deposit back they told me they'd already withdrawn the balance, just in case the tour went ahead, and they offered to hand it over, if it would help my business out," said Alison.

"It was an amount in excess of \$45,000. I had to explain that the money would sit in a trust account and we couldn't use those funds to prop us up."

"We've had other clients offer us



Chris Watson

“It certainly shows that the connections we forge with people can go well beyond simply providing a service.”

chocolates and plenty have popped their heads in to see how we are going, but this offer certainly took me back."

Richard van Schouwen from Kawana Waters Travel in Queensland was similarly surprised when one long-term customer rang and asked if he could help by gifting the agency \$50,000.

"I told him we were fine but he has returned several times to repeat the offer and make it clear that he wouldn't want us to pay the money back," said Richard.

"We have had two travel agencies

within 100 metres of us close and he's adamant he doesn't want to see us shut as well.

"I wasn't completely shocked because I know he's a very kind person who helps others and does a lot with charities. Nevertheless, I was still overwhelmed by his generosity. It certainly shows that the connections we forge with people can go well beyond simply providing a service."

Christian Hunter, Managing Director, Travellers Choice, says there have been plenty of other examples of customers offering various forms of financial assistance, including many who have insisted their agent deduct a processing fee for organising their refunds.

"Acts such as these bear witness to the fact that even in the most stressful of times people are capable of empathy and altruism," said Mr Hunter.

"But I think they are also encouraging for the entire travel industry because they reflect what I believe is a genuine desire among many Australians to do all they can to help local travel businesses thrive once travel restrictions are eased."

■ travelagentschoice.com.au



Dana Brown (left) and Jeremy Drake, members of the Agents Of Influence



Working under the Influence

ARE YOU looking for a dynamic and modern edge to your business? The Agents Of Influence (AOI) could have the solution.

The AOI is a newly-formed collective made up of 18 of Australia's most creative and social media savvy travel agents.

The organisation has been set up to offer brands authentic, creative and affordable content and social marketing solutions as part of bespoke agent fams, agent or hotel destination matching, itinerary creation and agent training.

We spoke to Jeremy Drake, Agents of Influence Founder and Travel Producer, about the exciting new initiative.

Q: How has the launch of The Agents of Influence been received?

A: It's been really well received, but like any new and innovative concept there has been a lot of education on how something so different can play a role in the market.

Our answer to that is that travel

has changed, travel marketing has changed and the AOI – who know travel intimately – can now help play a role for pretty much any creative brief.

One thing that has also been exciting is how energised the 18 agents have become among themselves in our private discussions as a group. Sharing ideas, content tips and details of when borders might open.

It's been great to see them excited about travel again at a time that has been pretty tough for us all financially and emotionally.

Q: Has the reaction to the launch surprised you, or surpassed your expectations?

A: The launch of AOI has certainly surpassed all our expectations. It was started as a collective to help each other, help the industry. It's morphing into something so much bigger than that.

You only need to look at our recent Round Up and the emails we collected at launch to see the interest in the model but also what these agents are capable of creating.

Q: How do you see AOI expanding in the coming months?

A: We hope we can start bringing on even more agents who we think can add value to the business. We'll be expanding out our specialist agent training and introducing some edu-Fam products, but what we're most looking forward to is sending our agents away domestically.

We want to get them to start creating content again for their businesses, while also having them work collaboratively with tourism bodies, hotel groups and wholesalers as the country gets moving again.

We think that there is a real value opportunity for travel businesses in the AOI to engage agents who can genuinely sell their products – but if you're a marketing manager also sitting around now asking yourself, "how can I build my multi-media marketing library for both my trade and consumer customer?" – the AOI is a good option to help you do this.

■ theagentsofinfluence.com.au



designing new products and 38 per cent are investing in technology to enhance product and customer service.

How COVID-19 is changing the rules in 2020 and beyond

Some 79 per cent of respondents believe that expanding customer communication channels will be among their main undertakings going forward. Other leading responses were diversifying product and destination offerings and creating new partnerships with new buyers or suppliers.

Changing suppliers as consumer needs change

To accommodate changing consumer needs, 83 per cent of respondents said they would consider suppliers they have never worked with before.

Loyalty to destinations, hotels and resorts is questioned

Almost 80 per cent of respondents said they were extremely likely to consider hotels and resorts they had never sold before.

Marketing efforts for recovery are focused on digital and social media

Some 79 per cent and 75 per cent of respondents claimed that digital and social media marketing respectively were their main focus. Co-op campaigns came in third place.

How destinations can support distribution partners in recovery

When asked how destination organisations (DMOs) can best help travel agencies and tour operators in recovery, the number one answer was inclusion in consumer marketing campaigns with travel agents and tour operators as the call to action.

The next top three answers included providing useful and timely information, creating information hubs for trade partners and creating marketing webinars tailored to agents and tour operators.

■ gfitourism.com.au

Travel operators look for nimble response

NEW RESEARCH has revealed how the Australian travel industry is responding to the challenges of COVID-19.

A survey of 40 travel executives shows many new opportunities exist for travel suppliers as tour operators and travel agency owners seek new product in a post COVID-19 landscape.

The in-depth study was carried out by tourism marketing agency GTI and the company's global travel alliance partner, Travel Consul.

"Many Australian travel businesses are fighting for survival and it's no surprise the research outlines that many businesses would not have expected to survive the COVID-19 downturn for longer than six months without government assistance," said Sarah Anderson, Managing Director of GTI.

"The good news is that almost all Australian travel operators surveyed are being nimble and considering new destinations and suppliers as they respond quickly to market needs.

"With 83 per cent of travel operators considering new suppliers, it is a great time for hotels, resorts and boutique tourism operators to be engaging with wholesalers and retailers to explore new opportunities."

The results included:

Business implications of COVID-19

Overall, the Australian tourism industry expects a 75 per cent decrease in business volume in Q3 2020 and a 65 per cent decrease in Q4 2020.

Interestingly, 67 per cent of respondents anticipated being able to sustain their businesses for one to six months without government financial support.

Actions implemented during the crisis

Approximately half of respondents reported they are improving their current products; 46 per cent are



Marine Parade, Swanbourne, WA



We need help to survive

Survey says job scheme is a keeper

A SURVEY of Australian travel agents has helped fuel calls for the extension of the JobKeeper scheme until 2021.

The Australian Federation of Travel Agents (AFTA) says the extension of JobKeeper for eligible businesses in the travel sector until June 30 next year is critical.

Agent contributions to AFTA's recent *Member Sentiment Survey* showed just how devastating the effect of COVID-19 has been to those in the industry. It also highlighted the resounding effects that an abrupt end to JobKeeper would have on the Australian travel ecosystem.

AFTA's latest submission to the Federal Government highlights:

- * The lifeline role of JobKeeper for Australia's 3,000 travel agencies and 40,000 employees across every regional city and most regional towns
- * An analysis showing that 98 per cent of AFTA/ATAS members applied for and were successful in receiving JobKeeper enabling their business to retain many trained and experienced staff
- * The fact that even as domestic restrictions lift, revenues will remain constrained due to continuing border closures and restrictions, rising unemployment and consumer uncertainty.

Some 749 AFTA members completed the survey and 70 per cent of respondents were owners or managers working for a traditional retail leisure agency.

A total of 82 per cent of agents said that they'd experienced a 100 per cent revenue decline as a result of COVID-19 with a further 16 per cent experiencing a 90 per cent decline.

Wages make up the greatest proportion of all travel industry costs, comprising more than 50 per cent of operating costs of traditional shop front travel agencies. The JobKeeper program has been the lifeline enabling businesses to retain staff.

If JobKeeper doesn't continue beyond September, some 42 per cent of respondents said that they intend

to either permanently or temporarily close their business. AFTA believes this demonstrates that without ongoing Government support further job losses are inevitable.

Despite all the challenges, the survey speaks to the passion and resilience of the travel industry with 31 per cent of travel agency owners and managers still feeling positive about the future of their business.

AFTA say they will continue to lobby Federal, State and Territory Governments, determined to:

- * Highlight the economic hit travel agents have taken, the problems agents are facing and the unique situation agents are in
- * Reinforce the critical importance of travel agents to the travel and tourism sector and the specific role these businesses play in the economic recovery process
- * Push for Government's ongoing support including financial assistance.

■ afta.com.au

IN BRIEF///

TRIPADVISOR HAS just published a study that shows consumers still have a thirst for travel.

Beyond COVID-19: The Road to Recovery for the Travel Industry revealed that more than two thirds of travellers (68 per cent) reported already thinking about where they want to go next.

Other key findings included the preference of shorter trips to destinations closer to home, increased interest in outdoor and nature activities, and nearly nine in 10 (86 per cent) of consumers say cleanliness will be very important.

■ tripadvisor.com/Covid19WhitepaperMay2020

AGENTS IN Western Australia are lobbying for a travel industry specific survival grant of between \$5,000 and \$25,000 through to June 2021.

The industry contributes approximately \$2billion annually to the state economy and employs 3,500 people.

They are pleading with Paul Papalia, Minister for Tourism and Small Business, to help them survive COVID-19 until the industry begins to recover next year.

"Travel agents play a critical role in keeping the wheels of West Australia's economy turning and providing critical employment opportunities, including in regional communities," said Tom Manwaring, Chair of the Australian Federation of Travel Agents (AFTA).

"However, without tailored government support while we get back on our feet, the future is bleak."

More than 70 per cent of agencies in the State are owner-operated small businesses with extremely high female representation.

"Small travel businesses like mine were the first impacted by the crisis,

are currently fighting to survive each day and will be the last to resume normal trading," said Christine Ross, Owner of Attadale Travel, who has five staff on JobKeeper.

"We're not asking for a handout, but a hand up to survive."

The grant agents are seeking would be on a scaled basis for agencies with a 50 per cent or greater downturn, with current downturns ranging from 90-100 per cent for agents.

with zero business income in an environment unseen previously.

"Our ask is simple – a relatively small investment of \$5 million from the State Government would preserve our small businesses and enable us to survive until we can get back to supporting the employees who are relying on us, our fellow travel operators and the state economy."

The corona virus downturn has hit particularly hard in WA. Agencies were

Travel agents are resilient and we know we will get through this just as we have with other major challenges.

"We are now on our knees at 90% to 100% for months on end with a simple ask that our State Government support our industry now like it has so many others impacted by this crisis," added Christine.

"We have worked through this entire crisis. We have millions of dollars of cancellations to manage and hundreds of clients to help and can't just hibernate. We're working fulltime

experiencing boom conditions prior to COVID-19 restrictions, with year on year growth.

"Travel agents are resilient and we know we will get through this just as we have with other major challenges," said Manwaring.

"We know that our customers will keep on supporting us because COVID has actually reinforced the value of a travel agent."

The Kimberley
in WA



LOVE LIVING THE LOCAL LIFE

INTREPID TRAVEL has introduced a new collection of tours with initial offerings in Australia, New Zealand and Europe.

With more than 75 multi-day adventures, the Intrepid Local range gives travellers the opportunity to explore closer to home while many international borders remain closed.

The tours were specifically developed to empower and support local communities during the economic recovery.

"Intrepid Local is our way of bringing over 30 years of experience closer to home," said Sarah Clark, Managing Director of APAC and Global

Project Lead for Intrepid Local.

"We wanted to create a product range for locals by locals that would not only bring travellers back together after months of isolation, but also give them a way to support their own communities and businesses rebounding from the pandemic."

Highlighting the range is a new theme called Intrepid Retreats, in which groups immerse themselves in one location, in handpicked accommodation ranging from small boutique properties to glamping, with nearby experiences ranging from hikes to wineries, farm visits and foraging.

"We predict a style of travel will emerge post-pandemic toward slow and grounded travel, where travellers will want to engage with local communities."

In addition to these new experiences, the company will still be offering day tours in more than 200 cities and 100 countries through Intrepid Urban Adventures.

Intrepid will also be ramping up their tailor-made and private group product for travellers who want a custom version of the group tours.

"More than a response to a new world of travel, Intrepid sees this range as an evolution of our product range to be more sustainable and offer climate conscious short haul travel."



The new Intrepid Local range includes:

Blue Mountains and Southern Highlands Road Trip

(Four days)

Visit bushfire affected areas to see how locals are bouncing back and support local communities, have a First Nations food experience and enjoy the coastal beauty of Jervis Bay.

Watch a Kangaroo Valley sunset together with wombats, see the Three Sisters and hike through wilderness.

New Zealand North Island Hike Bike and Canyon

(Five days)

This active adventure will see travellers digging their own hot spa in the sand at Hahei, taking a guided bike ride of the Blue and Green Lakes in Rotorua, a night walk in Redwood Forest, sleeping overnight in a Marae (Maori meeting grounds) and canyoning through glow-worm caves.

West Kimberley Adventure

(Six days)

Sleep under the stars and explore the gorges, ranges and rivers that typify the Kimberley landscape. This short journey will show you some of the region's best natural landscapes and places of cultural importance, like croc spotting on a wildlife cruise through Geikie Gorge, learning about the legend of Jandamarra on a tour of Tunnel Creek or bushwalking to Manning Falls.

There will be plenty of bush tucker as well as swims to cool off among water lilies and boab trees.

■ intrepidtravel.com/local



PASSPORT TO LUXURY PARADISE

FANCY A private island getaway with just you and a few of your close friends or family?

Set amid undulating and dramatic granite boulders with great beaches and untouched nature, Felicite Island in the Seychelles is home to the Six Senses Zil Pasyon.

The property is located 55

kilometres northeast of Mahé International Airport and is accessible only by a scenic 20-minute private helicopter journey or a one-hour boat trip on a private motor yacht.

Comprising 28 one-bedroom and two, two-bedroom spacious pool villas and two residences, the island offers exceptional seclusion nestled among the tropical landscape with uninterrupted ocean vistas from private decks and swimming pools.

Private groups of up to 20 guests can now hire the entire island for a one-week stay.

Included in the deal is your choice

RESORTS OPEN TO OFFERS

SRI LANKA will open its borders to international travellers from August 1 and two luxury resorts are promoting special reopening packages.

Guests who spend a total of six nights or more in Anantara Kalutara Resort or Anantara Peace Haven Tangalle Resort will make a 30 per cent saving on any room categories.

The package also includes complimentary airport transfers, daily buffet breakfast, spa treatments, high tea and a local experience. The offer is valid for travel until December 23.

The Kalutara property is a 55-minute drive from Bandaranaike International Airport in Colombo. It offers luxury private transfers, secure check-in and in-room dining experiences in the



privacy of your own pool villa.

Tangalle is on the island's southern coastline and is set amid an eight hectare coconut plantation with Indian Ocean views. Discover secluded villas with private pools, indulgent dining experiences, personalised service and family-friendly nature and wildlife activities.

To ensure guests feel safe and secure during their stay, Anantara's new 'Stay With Peace of Mind' program builds on existing health and safety measures for



of villas and residences, which are assigned prior to arrival or on arrival subject to the guest's preference. Breakfast, lunch and dinner daily, with menus created especially for the group, and full access to the island and resort facilities.

Activities include blue water fishing, sunset close of the day cruise, a guided Koko Island Sanctuary snorkelling, sustainable marine educational evenings, an 'Eat With Six Senses' chef's table and a sunset tasting of Billecarte salmon Champagne and Provence rosé with the team.

The package is priced at €330,000 (approx. \$AU539,000) for the week's stay.

■ ihgplc.com



Left and here:
Anantara Peace Haven
Tangalle Resort

heightened sanitisation and hygiene.

Every Anantara property has a dedicated 'Guest Guardian' responsible for regular disinfection and implementing social distancing measures where appropriate.

From the fully sanitised airport transfers to the breakfast experience, guest to team member interactions are minimised to ensure that guest safety and wellbeing remains the utmost priority.

■ anantara.com/en

Thinking inside the bubble

The first tentative steps to the return of overseas travel could come with the opening of travel 'bubbles' to New Zealand and the South Pacific.

In this exclusive report, we talk to two people heavily involved in talks to open up the airways again. Here's Andrew Waddel, Tourism New Zealand General Manager – Australia.

Q: Are you optimistic about the opening of a trans-Tasman travel bubble?

A: We're extremely hopeful about the potential for a trans-Tasman travel zone. It would have a significant positive impact should it be able to go ahead safely for both countries.

Not only would it help kick-start tourism, but it'd also have a positive impact on trade and transport sectors and enable families and friends to reunite.

Q: Do you have an update on when this might occur?

A: We'll be updated once governments agree it's safe to travel. We don't have 'inside information' or proprietary knowledge about assumptions on when the trans-Tasman travel zone will open.

Q: Logistically, what needs to be sorted out before it can happen?

A: The first step for both countries is to ignite domestic travel and both Tourism New Zealand and Tourism Australia have a significant role to play in their respective countries.

With momentum and trust in local travel, it is logical Kiwis and Australians will then be 'first to fly' internationally.

Q: How do you see the recovery of travel happening?

A: Before COVID-19, Australians made

up almost 40 per cent of international arrivals to New Zealand. In total visitor spend, Australians contribute \$NZ2.7b to the New Zealand economy, while Kiwis contribute \$AU2.6b in visitor spend to Australia.

A domestic tourism recovery will come first and this will be key for economic recovery in both Australia and New Zealand. Excitingly, for the first time in 30 years our remit has expanded to now include domestic tourism.

Q: What would you say to Aussies thinking about travelling to NZ?

A: With visitors likely to be restricted to only Kiwis and Australians, it's a perfect opportunity to go somewhere you've never been. The revived appreciation for the outdoors and life's simple pleasures means a New Zealand road trip is the best way to experience our people and place.

Q: How important will agents be in getting your message out there?

A: Travel agents will be integral in inspiring Australians to plan and book a New Zealand holiday when border restrictions lift. We know a large proportion of Australians rely on the expertise of agents to book their New Zealand holiday and this advocacy is invaluable to us.

Through this time, we've prioritised



Andrew Waddel, Tourism New Zealand General Manager – Australia

connecting with our agents across Australia to ensure we're supporting them and they're able to recommence selling destination New Zealand when the time comes.

Industry webinars, a newly launched agent Facebook group and our refreshed corporate website are a few of the actions we've taken to keep our *whanau* (family) of agents informed and connected.

Q: Are there any positives at all that can be taken from recent events?

A: Tourism in New Zealand is likely to look very different to what it once was – this pause has presented an opportunity to reshape the sector and ensure it enriches our people and place for future generations.

This means tourism will enrich New Zealand not only economically, but socially and environmentally for years to come.

■ newzealand.com



Caroline Brunel, Account Director, Tahiti Tourisme, Australia and New Zealand

A very Pacific point of view

Caroline Brunel, Account Director, Tahiti Tourisme, Australia and New Zealand, explains why agents will be crucial to the recovery of South Pacific destinations.

Q: How optimistic are you of a South Pacific travel bubble happening?

A: Very optimistic, but ultimately the decision is dependent on so many other factors. We are of course pushing for as soon as possible, but that doesn't mean we want the bubble at any cost.

The health and safety of the people of the nations we represent and our visitors must come first and we feel confident that the virus has been successfully managed in all of the destinations we represent – and through the measures we have implemented in destination, the risk will be mitigated.

Q: Can the tourism industry bounce back from COVID-19?

A: Absolutely. We are already seeing a subtle bounce back through the level of search and enquiry.

I believe that a lot of people will be more cautious and where and

when they travel, but there will also be a contingent of people who are desperate to start their revenge travel and as life returns to normal, the rate of travel will continue to increase.

Q: What will SP destinations have to do to attract tourists back?

A: Remind people of why our destinations are so wonderful and get people excited about travel again.

I believe that in the short term at least, a big part of any destination's marketing is going to be around the precautions and safety measures in place.

It's unrealistic to think that everyone will immediately travel like they used to, so any promotion is going to need to respond to the new state of play and address the biggest concerns that travellers are going to have.

Q: Obviously they will also have to convince travellers they are safe.

A: *The Islands of Tahiti* has been very proactive in introducing strong protocols around arrivals and expected behaviour while in the Islands. Collectively the islands that the lobby group represents only reported 88 cases of COVID-19, so the destinations are incredibly safe.

The correct management of

inbound visitors via the protocols that are in place are designed to keep it that way.

Q: Can any positives be drawn from recent events?

A: There is no doubt that for many of us, these past few months have been some of the most – if not the most – challenging of our careers. But at the same time, the results of the pandemic have forced a lot of us to work smarter, think differently and focus on what's really important.

We've had to innovate and rediscover what makes our destinations unique and compelling. We've also seen the travel industry come together with a level of support and positivity that is just heartwarming and it has made me so proud to be part of it.

Q: What role will agents play in the South Pacific recovery?

A: We have been working hard to ensure that we continue to support and engage with agents during this incredibly difficult time and we have seen a tremendously positive response from agents to that and the destination.

I think that, post COVID, some travellers in particular will be looking for advice and support from professionals more than ever.

When it comes to understanding the ins and outs of post COVID travel – especially international travel – a lot of people are going to be looking for the kind of professional support and inside knowledge that only a travel professional can offer.

■ tahititourisme.com.au



SHIP DELIVERY WITH A PERSONAL TOUCH

SILVERSEA CRUISES has taken delivery of its first destination-specific ship at an intimate ceremony in the Netherlands.

Company executives took a tour of the completed ship for the first time and were present for the official flag ceremony.

The celebrations aboard *Silver Origin* marked the first in-person cruise ship delivery since the global lockdown.

"We have invested our accrued know-how into the design of *Silver Origin*," said Manfredi Lefebvre d'Ovidio, Chairman of Silversea Cruises.

"Every element of the ship has been designed with the destination in mind and tailored to enhance the experience for travellers, while fostering a deep sense of respect for this magnificent ecosystem and everything that inhabits it."

The all-suite, all-balcony, 100-guest ship will welcome travellers year-round in the Galapagos Archipelago. She carries the latest state-of-the-art technology and has been designed with a focus on sustainability, destination onboard, expedition experience, authentic local culture, comfort and service.

At the heart of the ship, Basecamp will host educational activities where guests will interact with expert guides to learn more about the rare wildlife, remarkable landscapes and history of the Galapagos Islands, before and after excursions.

In-line with Silversea's new S.A.L.T. program, *Origin's* guests will benefit from an immersive culinary philosophy, centred upon regionally grown ingredients, Ecuadorian cuisine and a farm-to-table approach.

■ silversea.com



VENUS MAKES QUITE A SPLASH

SCHEDULED TO debut early next year in the Mediterranean and Northern Europe, *Viking Venus* has "floated out", touching water for the first time.

The 930-guest vessel is Viking's seventh ocean ship and the traditional float out ceremony took place at the Ancona shipyard in Italy.

"As the world continues its path to recovery from COVID-19, we remain focused on the future and with strong bookings for 2021 and the enthusiasm of our guests, we are optimistic about what is to come," said Torstein Hagen, Chairman of Viking.

Following a two-day process that set *Viking Venus* afloat, she was then moved to a nearby outfitting dock for final construction and interior build-out.

"We started Viking's ocean project eight years ago, and together with Fincantieri we have built the world's most beautiful ships," added Mr Hagen.

Among the itineraries the ship will sail is 'Empires of the Mediterranean', a 10-day voyage visiting nine destinations.

On an exploration bookended by Venice and Athens, guests will discover the ancient ruins of Olympia and the Acropolis, explore the medieval warrens of Zadar, Dubrovnik and Kotor, and delight in the beauty of Corfu.

For the first time, Viking also takes travellers to Koper for an in-depth exploration of picturesque Slovenia. The cruise is priced from \$6,295.

■ vikingcruises.com.au



Do the training to make a saving

UNIWORLD HAVE added a new course to their agent training platform which can help consultants qualify for special discount rates of up to 60 per cent.

"Next year is already proving to be a very successful year for us," said Ellen Bettridge, President & CEO of Uniworld.

"We're seeing that our guests still want to travel, so we want to prepare our travel agents with the most comprehensive tools to stay up-to-date with our offerings."

Uniworld University's latest course takes agents through new itineraries and destinations scheduled to debut in 2021.

These include a new rail itinerary, more dates for the new Peruvian Amazon itineraries and the health and sanitation protocols that will go into effect when the company resumes cruising.

The completion of the 15 to 30 minute course is required for agents to continue qualifying for Uniworld River Cruise Specialist benefits. After completing the course, graduates can enjoy special travel agent rates discounted up to 60 per cent and a River Cruise Specialist email badge.

"Our agents are such an imperative part of our business and we want to ensure that they understand Uniworld's points of difference and all of the exciting things to come for our brand."

■ uniworld.com/au/uniworld-university

New river brand launch

FANS OF river cruising have a new option with the award-winning Emerald Waterways brand launching in Australia this month.

Evergreen Cruises and Tours have been marketing the Emerald Waterways brand in Australia since it was established in 2014.

"The growth and success of the Emerald Waterways brand has been outstanding," said Anthony Laver, Group General Manager, Sales and Marketing, Scenic Group.

Created to offer high quality, four-star and exceptional value river cruising in Europe, the EW brand compliments the luxury segment that is driven by the Scenic Luxury Cruises sister brand globally.

Starting with two deluxe, custom-built river cruise ships in Europe, Emerald Waterways has expanded into a highly successful international brand, with a fleet of nine Star-Ships across Europe and South East Asia.

"In 2021, we will launch *Emerald Azzurra*, a new super yacht sailing the Adriatic, Mediterranean and Red Sea, with the Emerald Yacht Cruises brand," added Mr Laver.

The company have stressed that the river cruise experience and value pricing will stay the same, only the



brand name will change.

Included on an Emerald Waterways itinerary are all meals while cruising, complimentary wine and beer with lunch and dinner, daily shore excursions, special cultural inclusions with the EmeraldPLUS program and EmeraldACTIVE experiences like yoga, cycling, hiking and canoeing on cruises in Europe.

"With a winning blend of inclusions, excellence and innovation, Emerald Waterways has won multiple awards and legions of fans around the world," said Angus Crichton, Director Sales, Marketing & Product.

"Having successfully launched in New Zealand two years ago, it makes sense to introduce Emerald Waterways as a standalone brand in Australia."

Evergreen Tours will continue to offer land-based touring, with 2021 tours including its ever-popular program to Canada, Alaska and South America.

■ evergreentours.com.au/emerald-waterways

Threat to jobs if extension denied

AUSTRALIA'S CRUISE industry is backing calls for the JobKeeper program to be extended to prevent the possibility of more job losses across the travel industry.

The suspension of cruise operations is likely to cost Australia more than \$1.4 billion in lost economic activity by mid-September and threaten the jobs of more than 4,800 people, according to analysis commissioned by Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA) Australasia.

The analysis shows the shutdown has already resulted in an economic loss of almost \$500 million to the end of May, which in the absence of the Government's JobKeeper program would have cost almost 1,700 Australian jobs.

It forecasts that if the cruise suspension continues beyond its current date of September 17 and into the summer high-season, the economic loss to Australia would

total a further \$3.8 billion and place another 13,000 jobs at risk.

"Cruise tourism is worth \$5.2 billion a year to the Australia economy and supports more than 18,000 jobs," said Joel Katz, Managing Director CLIA Australasia.

"The suspensions that cruise lines and governments have enacted worldwide have been the right response as we confront COVID-19, but there is an enormous cost to those who make up the wider cruise community.

"There are many thousands of travel agents, tour operators, ports and destinations, technical support providers and food and beverage suppliers who support the cruise industry and are suffering enormous financial stress."

Mr Katz said CLIA had written to the Government to reinforce the economic importance of the cruise industry and to request a JobKeeper extension for travel agents and the

travel industry. He added that cruise lines were hard at work developing extensive measures to uphold the health and safety of passengers and crew when the time is right to resume sailing.

"The cruise industry is taking a wide-ranging and holistic approach to planning for COVID-19 safety when sailing can resume.

"While it is too soon to outline specific measures, the industry is considering protocols that will ideally entail a door-to-door strategy beginning at the time of booking through to when a passenger returns home.

"CLIA cruise lines are using this time to ensure we learn as much as possible from COVID-19 and develop the best possible response, so that the wellbeing of passengers remains our highest priority and the economic benefit of cruising can return to communities around Australia."

■ cruising.org.au



CRUISE WITH A PRINCESS

A NEW three-night cruise aboard the *PS Murray Princess* has just been launched.

The 'Murray River Restart Cruise' departs from Mannum in South Australia, discovering the historic towns, culture, food, wine, flora and fauna of the region.

Early booking saver fares start from \$836 per person twin share. The cruise departs July 10 and 31, August 21 and 28, and September 4 and 18. There's also a seven-night 'Upper Murraylands Cruise', departing in July, August and September.

■ murrayprincess.com.au



Birthday gift from the Captain

CAPTAIN COOK Cruises are celebrating 30 years in Fiji by offering a special birthday sale on all cruises through until 2022.

The 30 per cent sale, which includes school holidays, is for all three-, four-, seven- and 11-night departures. It is valid on all room categories and runs until July 31, with travel valid until March 31, 2022.

The company's all inclusive itineraries contain activities such as snorkelling over pristine coral reefs, visiting remote tropical beaches, kayaking, stand up paddle boarding and village visits. Five-star PADI diving is also offered from introductory to expert.

Cruises are aboard the purpose built *MV Reef Endeavour*, a small ship offering a highly personalised experience with only 60 cabins. Passengers explore remote parts of Fiji larger vessels cannot reach.

Sale prices for all three-night cruises start from \$1,117 per adult twin share; four-night cruises from \$1,502 per adult twin share; and seven-night cruises from \$2,496 per adult twin share.

Fares include shipboard accommodation, meals, guided tours, onboard entertainment and Wi-Fi.

■ captaincookcruisesfiji.com

Explore our backyard best

PONANT HAS released an inaugural 12-night voyage featuring a range of popular Australian mainland and island destinations.

Travellers will explore the Great Australian Bight from east to west while onboard the new eco-sensitive small luxury expedition ship *Le Bellot*.

Departing Melbourne, *Le Bellot* will head to King Island, renowned for its produce, history, flora and fauna. This will be followed by a visit to the Tamar Valley, home to some of Tasmania's famed cool-climate wines, fine cuisine and Arts Trail.

Explore South Australia's Limestone coast, Kangaroo Island and Port Lincoln, then on to Esperance and Albany, selected destinations that represent opportunities to experience outstanding food and wine regions.

At the heart of this voyage will be visits ashore with plenty of time to

meet locals and talented artisans and enjoy the quality regional produce.

"We have designed this close-to-home voyage, with exclusive and inclusive shore-excursions, to showcase the natural beauty and produce of the lands and marine environments that are part of our natural heritage," said Monique Ponfoort, Vice President PONANT Asia Pacific.

"An opportunity for Australians to explore our own backyard."

The trip offers the chance to see colonies of sea lions at Kangaroo Island, indulge in succulent Coffin Bay oysters at Port Lincoln and visit wineries and sample wines in the Tamar Valley and Limestone Coast.

In Albany, relive some of the nation's emotional First World War moments with a must-do visit to the national ANZAC centre.

■ au.ponant.com



Le Bellot. Picture courtesy PONANT/Philip Plisson



W SPELLS OUT LUXURY

EMERGE FROM isolation in style thanks to a couple of special packages being offered by W Brisbane.

Whether it's a romantic weekend away or some much needed pamper time, guests can while away the hours at AWAY Spa, sip and savour cocktails in Living Room Bar or chill out poolside at WET Pool.

The 'Take A Stay-Cay' package starts from \$409 and includes guaranteed room or suite upgrade, breakfast for two each morning of stay, valet parking, late checkout and a bottle of Veuve Clicquot Yellow Label Champagne.

The 'Get Your Glow On' package starts from \$389 for a solo stay or from \$525 for two guests. Price includes a 60-minute massage per guest at AWAY Spa, accommodation in a luxe guestroom and valet parking.

The first five-star hotel to debut in the city in 20 years, W Brisbane opened its doors in mid-2018. It offers views across the Brisbane River to South Bank and Mount Coot-tha, as well as three bars and restaurants that create a thriving local scene.

■ wbrisbane.com



THE NEWLY renovated Daydream Island Resort is ready to welcome back guests when it reopens on July 1.

The only ECO certified resort in the Whitsundays, Daydream Island offers 280 refurbished rooms and suites. It also features the only Living Reef in Australia where children can take part in the Reef Ranger program and snorkel with stingrays.

A strong advocate of conservation and education, the Living Reef holds more than 100 unique species of marine fish and 80 species of coral as well as nine new shovelnose rays and 10 new epaulette shark babies.

As a further commitment to the health and sustainability of the reef and the region, Daydream Island has made significant investment in a coral gardening edu-tourism project in partnership with the Queensland Government.

The project is aimed at restoring and propagating vast species, as well as teaching tourists about coral recovery.

Lover's Cove has 500 new coral colonies due to the resort's re-propagation program and will offer a new eco tour with the island's marine biologists.

The resort is offering a 'Winter Escape' offer for Queenslanders, which includes full buffet breakfast, free Wi-Fi access and complimentary use of all non-motorised water sport and resort recreational activities. Kids under 12 years stay free and eat free from the kid's menu when accompanied by an adult.

The package is valid for travel from July 1 to December 20 and rates start from \$125 per person per night twin share.

"We are excited and ready to welcome back local Queensland families so they can continue making many more happy memories," said Dilip Madhok, Chief Operating Officer, Daydream Island Resort.

■ daydreamisland.com

BACKYARD TARGET IS THE REAL QUEST

QUEST APARTMENT Hotels has launched 'On the Road Again', a new campaign aimed to inspire Australians to see more of their own backyard.

The campaign will mirror the easing of travel restrictions, with Quest incrementally expanding on its intrastate focus as the states and territories permit.

"On the Road Again aims to inspire Quest's core audience, the corporate traveller, and leisure travellers alike to reconnect with friends, family and clients, capturing the promising sentiment that life is slowly but surely getting back on track," said Jeff Baars, Quest Group Marketing and Digital Director.

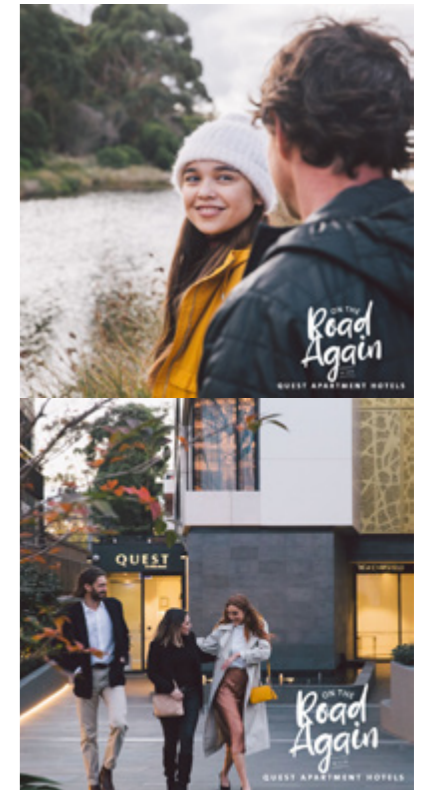
The campaign encompasses a series of online itineraries, travel packages and

road trip giveaways, as well as a local area marketing component dubbed 'Local Heroes', set to kick off this month.

Competition winners will curate their perfect road trip with a Quest travel specialist, receiving two nights' accommodation at any Quest property, breakfast both days and two dinners at local restaurants.

"Market data has indicated that consumers are feverishly awaiting their next adventure, so we hope 'On the Road Again' will encourage people to take the intrastate trips available right now, and inspire plans for interstate and international junkets as they become possible."

■ questapartments.com.au



Choice of six Staycations

MARRIOTT INTERNATIONAL has launched new themed 'Staycation' packages across their Australian, New Zealand and Pacific Island hotels.

Properties across Marriott's family of brands, including Sheraton, Westin, W Hotels, The Ritz-Carlton and Four Points, will offer the packages to encourage travellers to reconnect, explore and book with confidence for romantic getaways or family experiences.

"As restrictions across Australia and the Pacific start to ease, it is vitally important we encourage local travel to rejuvenate industries so adversely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic," said Sean Hunt, Area Vice President,

Australia, New Zealand and Pacific, Marriott International.

"We hope our campaign entices our customers to start moving once again."

Travellers have the choice of six packages across select hotels in Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific Islands:

- * Free breakfast Staycations. Enjoy breakfast for two adults and children under 12 from \$119
- * Romantic Staycations. Break the isolation with a romantic retreat including exclusive dining options from \$199
- * Wine & Dine. Stay and treat your taste buds with a selection of dishes made only with local produce at signature restaurants from \$175

* Kids Eat Free. Treat your kids to a staycation to remember with dining options included. Soak up the sunshine and make memories with your family from \$199

* Golf Escape. Book a golf experience at Sheraton Grand Mirage Resort Port Douglas and enjoy the warmth of tropical Queensland from \$279

* Spa & Relaxation. Stay in deluxe accommodation and receive a relaxing spa treatment from \$369.

The cut-off date for the Staycation packages is August 31.

■ hotel-deals.marriott.com/pacific-staycation





WELLNESS CHAMPIONS OF THE SKY

Fiji Airways has outlined its plan to return to flying once border restrictions ease and the demand for travel returns.

The 'Travel Ready' program details the airline's commitment to safeguarding the health and safety of its customers and staff.

This includes the creation of a new onboard role of medically qualified Customer Wellness Champions.

This role will manage and maintain wellbeing, customer medical safety and promote wellness through service interactions to passengers and crew onboard and on the ground for every flight on the Fiji Airways international network.

"Like many nations in the Pacific, tourism is an integral part of the Fijian economy and COVID-19 has had a devastating impact on the industry," said Andre Viljoen, Fiji Airways Managing Director & CEO.

"As the national carrier for Fiji, we are committed to getting back in the skies as safely as possible and cannot wait to greet customers with our famous Fijian hospitality."

Fiji Airways will await approval from authorities in Fiji and its key international markets before announcing international flight schedules. At present time, international flights remain cancelled through the end of July.

■ fijiairways.com/en-au



READY FOR TAKE OFF

AIR NEW Zealand has reacted cautiously to plans to open a route between Canberra and Wellington.

The airline says it's ready to resume Trans-Tasman operations, but only once both governments have given approval for Tasman borders to re-open.

The airline is currently working with the Australia New Zealand Leadership Forum as part of the Trans-Tasman Safe Border Group.

"Together with airports, tourism bodies and government

representatives, safe border recommendations are being developed to be proposed to New Zealand and Australian government agencies for their consideration," said an Air New Zealand spokesperson.

"We appreciate that both businesses and travellers are enthusiastic about operations – and we assure customers that as soon as it is possible to operate, Air New Zealand will be ready to return to the Tasman."

■ airnewzealand.com.au



Picture courtesy James Salter

HAPPY LANDINGS

EMIRATES HAVE celebrated the landing of their first passenger plane at Perth Airport since March.

The airline has had services flying in to both Sydney and Melbourne since May 21, along with a service into Brisbane. The four Aussie cities are part of the more than 50 destinations currently served by Emirates.

■ emirates.com



IN PURSUIT OF TRAVEL APPINESS

In this exclusive article for *Traveltalk*, JAMIE SHOSTAK, co-founder and head of growth at Appetiser App Development, explains how apps can help revive the travel industry – even if customers are stuck at home for now.

THE TRAVEL industry has undeniably taken one of the worst hits of any sector during the COVID-19 pandemic.

As Australia considers entering into travel bubbles with certain international markets, one way to ensure that green lane travel agreements remain safe is to encourage travellers to download an app which can track their movements within each country.

But this goes beyond contact tracing. I believe apps have so much potential in helping to revive the travel industry and transform the way airports, hospitality, transport and retail engage and interact with travellers.

Here are just some of the ways apps can be utilised to revive travel brands and help tourists look forward.

VIRTUAL REALITY

Advances in virtual reality mean that travel companies are now able to provide potential customers with a realistic sense of what it's like to take a trip with them from the safety and comfort of their living room.

This can be applied in a myriad of ways, from hotel room tours to dining experiences or even safari tours. The great news is the technology is already out there for businesses to use: the Google Earth app currently lists millions of 360 photos in geo-tagged

locations around the globe.

Future bookings can be made off the back of virtual tours and travel brands need not shy away from encouraging customers to plan ahead.

AUGMENTED REALITY

This is technology that enables developers to overlay a digital world over the top of our own. It has some exciting applications for the travel and tourism industry, too.

Imagine creating a scavenger hunt around your chosen location, where tourists can discover the history of the place they're visiting. Or how about making travel even easier with guided directions laid over streets or airport corridors?

AR is a great way to get people excited about travelling around their local area, especially if they're unable to travel interstate due to COVID-19 restrictions.

MARKETING THROUGH EXISTING APPS

Creating your own app is great, but there are also exciting marketing opportunities to be found by partnering with existing apps. For example, my own company has built apps for several travel clients who have gone on to collaborate with the likes of WebJet and JetStar.



Jamie Shostak, co-founder and head of growth at Appetiser App Development

There are hundreds of mapping, booking, or currency convertor apps – why not utilise their ad space and advertise your own business? Alternatively, look for apps that provide a platform for travel and tourism businesses just like yours. Many, such as TravelBuddi, allow you to list your business for free.

Apps are never going to be a silver bullet for the travel industry; COVID-19 means that many factors are simply out of anyone's control. But the one thing that can be controlled is our ability to build customer excitement around travel.

Now is the time to build brand loyalty, to inspire people to want to travel, and to help them see the world beyond their own four walls. Then when things finally do return to normal, you know exactly which business they'll be visiting first: yours.

■ *Appetiser App Development is Australia's fastest-growing app development agency. appetiser.com.au*



Uluru at sunset.
Picture courtesy
Tourism NT/Emilie
Ristevski

Time to discover familiar territory

The Northern Territory borders will officially re-open on July 17 with popular destinations including World Heritage-listed Kakadu National Park and Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park accessible again for all Australians to enjoy.

Here, we look at what the region has to offer as Tourism Northern Territory encourages Aussies to discover the tropical North and the blue skies of the Red Centre.

TOURIST DESTINATIONS, attractions, restaurants and tour operators are getting ready to welcome new and returning visitors to the Northern Territory.

From 17 July, self-quarantine for domestic travellers arriving in the Territory is no longer required.

Tony Quarmby, Executive General Manager of Marketing Tourism NT, anticipates first-time visitors will be keen to visit popular destinations such as Darwin, Alice Springs, Uluru-Kata Tjuta, Kakadu National Park, Kings Canyon, Nitmiluk National Park, Arnhem Land and the Tiwi Islands.

“The Territory is a truly iconic destination; one that’s on the bucket list for many Australians. For too long Australians have said ‘I’ll go one day’ – well that day has come, there are no excuses left,” said Mr Quarmby.

“Everyone here is looking forward to re-opening and sharing this spectacular part of our own backyard with the rest of the country.

“This is your chance to escape your routine and the winter chill; the weather is warm, it’s more affordable than before and there are plenty of wide open spaces to explore and shake off the ‘isolation’ blues.”

From the Red Centre to the Top End, the Territory is the envy of international locations with outback adventures, an abundance of wildlife, World Heritage-listed National Parks, waterfalls, swimming holes and the world’s oldest living culture.

■ northernterritory.com

Let there be light

The Northern Territory Major Events Company has re-confirmed that *Parrtjima – A Festival in Light*, will be held from September 11-20 in Alice Springs.

Staged over 10 nights, this is tipped to be the first major arts festival following COVID-19 restrictions.

Parrtjima 2020 is all about lifting the spirits from the work of artists – old and new – to the spirits of audiences who discover the festival

in Mparntwe (Alice Springs).

It is a light and art event in the desert landscape unlike anywhere else in the world. Each evening, nearly two kilometres of the MacDonnell ranges come to life with lighting effects, all crowned by the star-scape above.

More information on the festival program and performers will be released shortly.

■ parrtjimaaustralia.com.au



Parrtjima Festival.
Picture courtesy
Parrtjima/NTMEC

WHY YOU SHOULD ‘DO’ KAKADU

AUSSIERS ARE being urged to follow in *Crocodile Dundee*’s footsteps and tick Kakadu off their bucket list.

Paul Hogan brought the region to the world’s attention in the hit 1986 movie, but unlike most winter dry seasons – from April through to October – this year Australians will have Kakadu National Park to themselves.

Kakadu is best seen over three or four days, or preferably a week, to follow in the footsteps of ‘Hoges’ and experience the dramatic landscape, rich Indigenous culture, surging waterfalls and abundant wildlife.

The ‘dry’ season is actually made up of three seasons, according to Kakadu’s Indigenous calendar, which has been developed over 65,000 years of habitation of the region.

Yekke lasts from mid-May to June, *Wurrkeng* is classified as the “cold weather season” (mid-June to mid-August) but while overnight temperatures might dip to the mid-teens, daytime temperatures usually reach 30C.

The dry season finishes with *Kurrung* from mid-August through October, when millions of magpie geese cover the receding wetlands, along with more than 200 other bird species and a vast range of other animals, making it one of the “greatest (natural) shows on earth”.

Kakadu is less than three hours’ drive from Darwin, with fully-sealed roads making travel to and within the park easy, though 4WD vehicles are recommended to ensure visitors can enjoy the full *Crocodile Dundee* experience.



Yellow Water Cruises

FIVE KAKADU MUST-DO’S

Sunset at Ubirr:

Ubirr’s rock art galleries contain a remarkable panoramic sweep of history with drawings ranging from the thylacine to the arrival of Europeans. Visit at sunset when the setting sun creates a rich palette of colours on the rocky outcrops and the vast Nadab Plain below.

Sunrise on Yellow Water Billabong:

A visit to Kakadu must include a Yellow Water Cruise to spot crocodiles and the extensive bird-life. There are some 260 varieties to see, from eagles through to the comb-crested jacana.

Cruise guides provide expert commentary, with an Indigenous narrative of the heritage, culture, flora and fauna of the wetlands.

Legendary rock-art:

Nourlangie Rock houses some of Kakadu’s most historic rock art. The paintings illustrate the important stories, food sources, wars and mythological figures of the Indigenous people.

Climb to the top of the rock for sweeping views of the escarpment, while you can follow in Hoges’ footsteps through the paperbark forest on the Anbangbang Billabong Walk.

To infinity and beyond:

Located on Waterfall Creek, Gunlom – known as Echo Pool – is a combination of waterfall and plunge pool. The climb to the top of the waterfall is worth the effort as it features an infinity rock pool providing panoramic views across the southern parts of Kakadu National Park.

Fly like an eagle:

A fixed wing or helicopter tour is an unforgettable experience, with the experienced pilots able to show you the many locations that starred in the *Crocodile Dundee* films.

Where to stay: Mercure Kakadu Crocodile Hotel is located in Jabiru, the main township of Kakadu. Rooms are available from \$159 per night.

Cooinda Lodge is in the southern part of Kakadu National Park and offers fully-upgraded Lodge rooms (available from \$199 per night), Outback Retreat glamping tents (from \$170 per night) and extensive grounds for camping and caravans (from \$30 a night).

■ kakadutourism.com; kakadutourism.com/accommodation



RESORT UNVEILS ITS NEW FACE

AUSTRALIA'S LARGEST integrated resort will unveil its multi-million dollar re-design when it reopens on August 1.

During the recent closure, Voyages Indigenous Tourism Australia took the opportunity to bring forward the completion of an extensive \$50m refurbishment of Ayers Rock Resort and improvements to the airport infrastructure.

This encompassed extensive upgrades at the five-star Sails in the Desert hotel, including all guest rooms and suites, the lobby, pool and restaurant.

The money also went to the completion of upgrades to The Lost Camel hotel and the replacement of toilet blocks and bathrooms in the popular campground.

Upgrades to the airport infrastructure include new screening areas making it easier for guests to clear security and start their holidays.

"We are looking forward to welcoming guests back to the spiritual heart of our country and showcasing the work we have done at the resort in their absence" said Grant Hunt, Voyages CEO.

"This is the perfect time for Australians to get out and explore our amazing landscapes including the vast central desert, iconic Uluru and Kata-Tjuta as well as experiencing the important Indigenous cultural stories

shared by the Traditional Owners of our land."

Visitors can enjoy the 50,000 stems of Bruce Munro's *Field of Light* installation, dine under the stars at Sounds of Silence or indulge in a four-course table d'hôte menu at the award-winning Tali Wiru.

An extensive range of activities including helicopter rides, Segway tours, camel rides and dot painting in and around Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park will also be available.

Around the resort, guests can take part in free activities including bush tucker demonstrations, guided garden walks, didgeridoo workshops and traditional bush yarns.

Popular dining spots including Ilkari Restaurant, Walpa Bar, Geckos Café and Indigenous trainee-run Kulata Academy Café will be open with dine-in and takeaway alternatives.

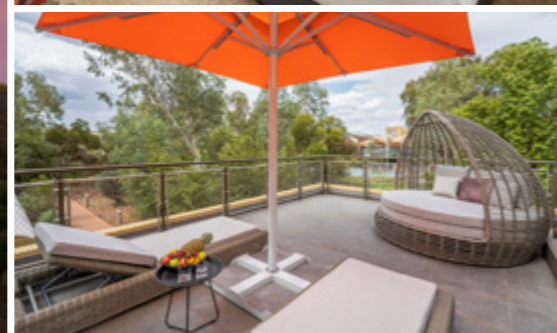
To celebrate the resort's re-opening, Voyages will extend special offers for stays of two-, three- and four or more nights with discounts of up to 50 per cent.

Special rates are available to book now for travel from August 1, including return airport transfers, in-room Wi-Fi, free guest activities and free use of the resort shuttle service.

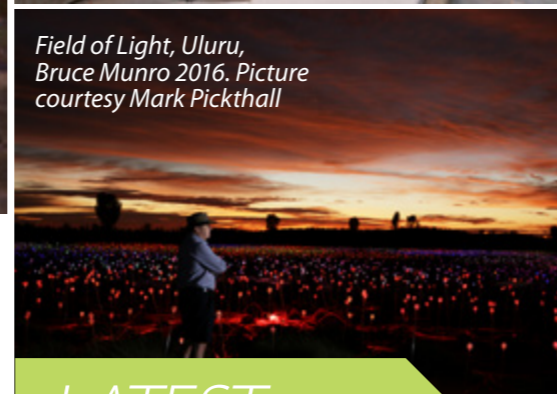
Desert Gardens Hotel and the Outback Pioneer Hotel remain closed. [■ ayersrockresort.com.au](http://ayersrockresort.com.au)



Coalseam. Picture courtesy Rob Mulally/Georgia Rickard



Field of Light, Uluru, Bruce Munro 2016. Picture courtesy Mark Pickthall



LATEST NEWS///

Tourism Northern Territory has just launched a new national marketing campaign, 'The Territory is the Answer'.

The initiative uses current consumer sentiment and uncertainties Australians are experiencing around holiday planning to capture their imagination and inspire a Northern Territory escape.

A series of TV ads have been specifically designed to attract Aussies looking for experiences in their own backyard by highlighting the Territory's bucket list attractions.

The national campaign runs until October and includes TV, print, digital, email marketing, out-of-home and radio advertising, social media, public relations and consumer activations.

Among the key messages are the abundance of wildlife, World-Heritage listed National Parks and outdoor adventures.



These epic trips are pure gold

AUSSIERS ARE being encouraged to take one of 21 road trips through the Golden Outback.

This vast and diverse region covers 54 per cent of Western Australia and is remote, rugged and beautiful.

The trips include visits to the world's biggest rock, farming and mining country, and one of the whitest beaches on the planet.

The Golden Outback stretches from the red earth of Mt Augustus in the Gascoyne-Murchison region (the world's largest monolith twice the size of Uluru), to the beaches of Esperance, Fitzgerald Coast and the South Coast.

Along the way visitors can enjoy unique scenery that bursts with colour during wildflower season in spring.

At the very heart of the region lies the modern mining hub of Kalgoorlie and the Goldfields, offering fascinating insights into the history and heritage of the wild gold rush days.

To the west in the Wheatbelt, be rewarded with views of rolling farmland dotted with rural townships and a giant public art trail of colourful silos, and the famous Wave Rock.

Launching the 'Road Trip Country'

campaign, Marcus Falconer, CEO of Australia's Golden Outback, believes that corona virus has completely changed our travel habits.

"The road trip has never been more popular and with so many diverse roads trips for travellers to choose from, the Golden Outback really is road trip country," he said.

"There are 21 different itineraries from one-hour road trips to 15-day adventures and everything in between.

"It's an exciting prospect to jump



Merredin Silos in the Wheatbelt

in the car with family or friends to explore somewhere new: there's a fantastic feeling of freedom that you only get on an epic road trip."

Other attractions include the world's largest open air gallery featuring 51 sculptures by Anthony Gormley on the salt flats of Lake Ballard. There's the striking bubblegum pink coloured Lake Hillier near Esperance and the history and heritage of the 1800s gold rush era from Meekathara to Norseman.

"Not only does it support our tourism businesses, but a road trip through WA's Golden Outback is a really awesome holiday – there are things you'll experience that you can't experience anywhere else in the world."

■ roadtripcountry.com.au

The 21 road trips consist of:

- | | |
|------------------------------|--|
| Road to the Rock | Public Silo Trail |
| Canning Stock Route | Golden Pipeline Heritage Trail |
| Kingsford Smith Mail Run | Granite and Woodlands Discovery Trail |
| Wool Wagon Pathway | Wheatbelt Way |
| Miners Pathway | Wildflower Way |
| Golden Quest Discovery Trail | Pathways to Wave Rock |
| The Outback Way | The Holland Way and the John Holland Track |
| Norseman Heritage Trail | Road to Esperance |
| Gunbarrel Highway | Ravensthorpe Ranges |
| Anne Beadell Highway | Great Ocean Drive |
| Leonora Loop Trails | |

Aussie stars pledge road trip support

A GROUP of Australian celebrities are backing a new campaign to encourage more families to start travelling again.

The #RoadTripPledge has been launched by Stayz to help support regional Australia after the negative impact of bushfires and COVID-19 travel bans.

Natalie Bassingthwaighe, Cameron Daddo, Jamie Durie, Tom Williams and Dr Katrina Warren are just some of the personalities backing the initiative.

"We are extremely proud, even during hard global times, to launch the #RoadTripPledge in support of regional tourism and ensuring this is remembered across 2020," said Simone Scoppa, Travel Expert for Stayz.

"We have seen since travel restrictions have eased in Australia, that the demand to stay in a holiday home has increased significantly, where people are wanting to stay in a spacious whole home with their family and friends but away from other people."

As part of the promotion, people who take the #RoadTripPledge and are one of the first 1,000 bookings (for more than \$1,000) made at Stayz.com.au will be eligible to claim and receive a \$100 VISA gift card.

This can be used in the regional holiday destination, injecting much needed money back into small businesses that need it most.

Leading children's psychologist Dr Michael Carr-Gregg is also onboard, offering advice to families on how to involve their kids in the pledge, address social changes and reconnect as a family in 2020.

"2020 hasn't turned out to be the new decade and chapter we were all expecting," he said.

"From the impact of the bushfires



The #RoadTripPledge

As a reminder of the incredible power of regeneration.

I stand with regional Australian towns.

I vow to explore impacted places by road.

To spend generously in towns of all sizes.

To always ask locals "are you okay".

To value moments of connection with the people I love.

And find a renewed sense of adventure together.

Even when the headlines have stopped, and the social media has ceased.

We will not forget the reason why we made our #RoadTripPledge.

that led to a lost summer syndrome for so many families, to the recent health crisis that has impacted the way we socialise, greet people and holiday, it has been trying and life changing times.

"While we must still be careful and diligent, we need to also remember that connecting, exploring and spending time together as a family

unit is now more important than ever, and doing this locally by road a safe option.

"Visiting regional towns presents the opportunity for children to learn about their history, indigenous culture, nature and wildlife, inspiring curiosity beyond what they may learn in the classroom."

■ roadtrippledge.com.au



Trafalgar Royal Mail
Hotel Kitchen Garden

GO NEAR NOT FAR

TRAFALGAR HAS created a 'Near Not Far' limited domestic trip series to complement its 14 existing trips through Australia.

"We've taken time to reflect on what travel in a post-COVID world will look like – listening to feedback from our past guests, travel agents partners and community sentiment to truly understand how Australian travellers are feeling," said Jason Wolff, Managing Director Trafalgar.

"We wanted to know what's important to our guests, what's going to help them travel with confidence and how we can continue to support small businesses and regional communities devastated by firstly the bushfires and now COVID-19."

Among the new itineraries is the seven-day 'Victoria's Natural Wonders' from Melbourne through to the Mornington Peninsula. Guests will visit the historic Lavandula Swiss Italian Farm in the town of Daylesford, a place touched by the economic repercussions of the bushfires.

"We want to provide our travel agent partners with some positive news and a genuine revenue opportunity by reconnecting and reassuring their clients that they can travel domestically with confidence and in a way that makes a difference to the families, businesses and communities around Australia."

Trafalgar's new \$99 reduced deposit offer is available for trips booked between now and September 1 for travel between September 1 and October 31, 2021.

■ trafalgar.com



The Field of
Light, Uluru

CALLING ALL YOU AUSSIE EXPLORERS

TRAVELMARVEL HAS added two new Australian itineraries in the Northern Territory and Victoria as part of the company's 'More to Explore' campaign.

The seven-day 'Victoria's Great Lakes & High Country' tour departs from Melbourne and has been designed to support bushfire affected regions.

Take in the Great Lakes district then ascend to Mt Hotham and Mt Buffalo before uncovering Australia's notorious history in Beechworth and Glenrowan. Along the way, savour the region's best produce including wine, cheese and beer.

Including three nights in Lakes Entrance and another three in Bright, this relaxed paced tour is priced from \$2,695 per person twin share, which includes a \$500 per person discount for bookings made before August 31.

The seven-day 'Red Centre Escape' covers the heart of Australia. Explore Uluru and Kings Canyon while learning about Indigenous culture and catch the Field of Light display.

With TravelMarvel's \$500 per person discount for bookings made before August 31, this trip is priced from \$2,995 per person twin share.

Both trips include most meals, premium accommodation, the services of a tour director and airport transfers.

"At a time when we are seeing an increased interest in travelling locally, we are very happy that we have the ability to respond to market demands and be able to extend our touring options to include these great destinations," said Paddy Scott, TravelMarvel's Brand Manager.

"These new tours have been specially designed to be inclusive of the key sights but at a relaxed pace. With two and three night stays, guests will have a chance to immerse themselves in the region."

Other tours include the 10-day 'Grand Tasman' priced from \$3,395 per person twin share, the 15-day 'Wonders of the South West' from \$5,595 per person twin share and the 18-day 'West Coast Adventure' starting from \$7,995 per person twin share.

■ travelmarvel.com.au



Short is now very sweet

APT HAVE unveiled a new Luxury Short Breaks range, providing guests with the chance to explore Australia in style.

The portfolio includes multi-night stays at luxury lodges and boutique accommodation in remote and beautiful locations.

Guests will have time to relax and indulge as well as having the opportunity to discover more about the region they are visiting. All while travelling onboard APT's own fleet of customised luxury 4WD adventure vehicles, which cater for a small-group size of no more than 20 people.

The new touring style has no more



Left: Museum of Old and New Art, TAS
Above: Vasse Felix, WA
Right: The Louise, Barossa. Photo courtesy Tourism SA.

than three stops per trip, which allows time for intimate explorations of some of Australia's most spectacular and remote regions.

"As we all know, the travel industry has changed dramatically and our priority now is to create incredible experiences that are possible in this new travel landscape," said Chris Hall, Managing Director, APT.

"Our new Luxury Short Breaks will feature the best accommodation in spectacular locations with a focus on relaxation, food and wine, knowing that everything is all taken care of by APT."

■ aptouring.com.au



New tours include

* Six-day 'Margaret River 4WD Exploration' staying at the exclusive Bunker Bay Resort and indulging in the region's finest wines and produce. It is priced from \$2,995 per person twin share, including Super Deal saving of \$600 per couple.

* Six-day 'Tasmania Epicurean 4WD Escape' which includes two-nights at the award winning Saffire Freycinet luxury lodge. Priced from \$6,345 per person twin share, including Super Deal saving of \$600 per couple.

* Seven-day 'South Australia Flinders Ranges & Wineries' which includes two nights 'glamping' at Ikari Safari Camp in Wilpena Pound. Priced from \$2,995 per person twin share, including Super Deal saving of \$600 per couple.

LOVING A LAKE ESCAPE

COUPLES WANTING to relax, reconnect and ramp up the romance are being encouraged to visit a laidback coastal destination.

Lake Macquarie is only a 90-minute drive north from Sydney and has much to offer.

There are plenty of parks for a picnic, with Pelican Foreshore offering the perfect spot for a cheese platter and a glass of wine while the sun sets over the lake.

For the more adventurous, hike to the Watagan Mountains, trekking through rainforest and past waterfalls before unpacking a basket for lunch at Boarding House Dam picnic area.

Beach lovers can enjoy Lake Macquarie's pristine coastline, or head out onto the lake itself. JetBuzz at Cams Wharf has a range of boats and watercraft to hire, including stand up paddle boards.

Gourmands will appreciate the area's waterfront eateries where freshly-caught seafood and famous Hunter Valley wines are highlights on many local menus.

For something extra special, Crusoe's on the Lake is an overwater dining spot located within Lake Macquarie Yacht Club. It offers some of the best dining views in Belmont, coupled with seafood platters including fresh blue swimmer crabs, SA tiger prawns, Sydney rock oysters, lemon pepper squid, panko crumbed prawns and battered sweetlip snapper.

■ visitlakemac.com.au



Exciting tours changing the conversation

TRIPFUSER HAS premiered its own exclusive travel bubble gallery of more than 100 locally designed, fully customisable itineraries.

The holiday options have been designed by an experienced panel of local experts in Australia, New Zealand

and across the Pacific Islands and are targeted at Tripfuser's network of more than 2,400 travel agents.

"It's time to change the conversation, embrace the new normal and start talking to clients again about travelling – even if that is about travelling closer to home," said Matt McCann, CEO of Tripfuser.

"Tripfuser has spent the past two months building an amazing gallery of travel options in Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific Islands, markets where we believe we are

going to be able to travel this year."

The company, which recently became ATAS-accredited, built the gallery with a working group of more than 30 travel agents who helped refine the trips to deliver great experiences and value.

Tours include a six-star long weekend in the Blue Mountains, exploring the Red Centre by 4WD, a beach holiday in Fiji or hiking New Zealand's South Island tracks.

"Our 'Close to Home' gallery includes everything from weekend escapes to the iconic 'trips of a lifetime'. With over 100 itineraries there will be an option that will work for you and your clients."

■ agent.tripfuser.com/close-to-home-tours

NEW CAMPAIGN IS JUST INCREDIBLE

A JOINT tourism initiative has been launched designed to inspire young active couples to book a trip to Port Stephens.

Destination New South Wales has partnered with Destination Port Stephens to develop the new 'Incredible by Nature' brand and marketing campaign.

"With the recent easing of travel restrictions, we now have the opportunity to seize on the enormous appetite among holidaymakers to explore their own backyard," said Stuart Ayres, Minister for Jobs, Investment, Tourism and Western Sydney.

Port Stephens offers coastal bushland, undulating sand dunes, rocky coastline and pristine beaches.

"Driving visitation to regional NSW is one of the best ways we can help our state to recover from the crippling effects of bushfires and COVID-19 and Incredible By Nature shows just how many extraordinary experiences there are to enjoy right on our doorstep."

■ portstephentourism.com.au



Quad biking. Picture courtesy Destination NSW

BROCHURE THAT BOASTS THE BEST OF BITUMEN

ADVENTURE DESTINATIONS have announced the release of a new *Self Drive Australia & New Zealand* brochure.

The 116-page brochure contains 65 Road Trip Experiences for the ultimate independent travel adventure.

Itineraries feature quality hotels and resorts or the best accommodation available. All of the suggested itineraries can be modified or tailor-made if travellers are after something individual.

For guests who don't want to self drive, Adventure Destinations also offer itineraries for FIT arrangements.

■ adventuredestinations.com.au





The Gaspé Peninsula, Quebec



Wizard Island



Canyon de Chelly National Monument

Discover a surplus of sights

FROM CANADA to California and Yakima to the Yukon, Globus and Cosmos have unveiled a new series of 'Undiscovered' holidays in North America.

Each of the nine itineraries featured as part of this new series of tours offers adventure seekers the opportunity to explore the wilderness and discover its inherent beauty.

"There's a surplus of sights that even repeat travellers to the U.S. are yet to explore," said Gai Tyrrell, Managing Director Australasia of the Globus family of brands.

"Between North America's breathtaking national parks, cool emerging cities and tiny, historic towns is a world of wonders, waiting to be discovered."

Here are eight wilderness experiences travellers can look forward to:

Yucca It Up

Discover rugged rock formations, stark desert landscapes and twisted trees on a 4WD tour through Joshua Tree National Park. (Globus, 'Southern California Charms & Hollywood Dreams')

Spinning Your Wheels

Along with a Navajo guide, join a 4WD backcountry vehicle adventure in Canyon de Chelly National Monument and take delight in the area's canyon, surrounded by towering sandstone cliffs. (Globus, 'Lost Canyons of the Southwest')

Living on the Edge

Visit Crater Lake National Park, which was created by a collapsed volcano. Take a drive around the rim for views of the deep blue lake and Wizard Island – a cinder cone near the western edge of the lake. (Cosmos, 'Exploring the Pacific Northwest')

What's Bugging You?

Feel the wind in your hair on a buggy ride on the coastal sandhills of Oregon's Dunes National Recreation Area. (Cosmos, 'Exploring the Pacific Northwest')

Eagle Eyes

Take a glacier cruise for an up-close look along the four-kilometre face of Meares Glacier. Watch for eagles, whales, mountain goats, dolphins and sea lions. (Cosmos, 'Alaska & the Yukon')

Get Sidetracked

Take a train ride aboard the

world-famous Alaska Railroad to Denali National Park. It promises an unforgettable journey through Alaska's untamed wilderness. (Cosmos, 'Alaska & the Yukon')

Stay Cool

For an exhilarating experience, take the Ice Explorer – an all-terrain vehicle designed for glacial travel – to traverse the Columbia Icefield and experience enormous glaciers up close. (Cosmos, 'Western Canada with Inside Passage')

Seal of Approval

Embark on an Inside Passage cruise where you will see mountains, roaring waterfalls, abundant marine and wildlife, including whales, seals and raptors. (Cosmos, 'Western Canada with Inside Passage')

"On our 'Undiscovered North America' holidays, we will take globetrotters down the less-travelled highways, legendary lanes and scenic country roads to the special places and parks other tour companies don't visit," added Ms Tyrrell.

"These itineraries help travellers discover the world's tucked-away towns, lesser-known nooks and secluded seafronts for an unforgettable – and unique – holiday."

■ globus.com.au; globusfamily.com.au



Dunluce Castle

Tourism boost from magically Fowl film

IRELAND IS hoping for a major tourism boost following the release of a new movie based on a best-selling book.

Artemis Fowl – inspired by and partially filmed on location in Ireland – was released by Disney last month. It deals with the magical world of a 12-year-old criminal mastermind.

A much-loved book series written by Irish author Eoin Colfer, *Artemis Fowl* captured the imaginations of millions around the world with its blend of Irish mythology, futuristic technology and superhero action.

The movie was shot on location in Ireland in 2018 with some of the destinations appearing in the film.

These included the dramatic Dunluce Castle, a sixteenth-century ruin which sits atop a cliff on the Causeway Coast, and White Rocks Beach in Portrush, known to millions of golf fans worldwide as the backdrop to Royal Portrush Golf Club.

"It was always a determination to shoot at least some of the movie there and to particularly give a sense of the scale of Ireland, the beauty of Ireland, the coast, the landscape, the colour of that famous grass, and the spectacle of some of the ancient buildings," said Sir Kenneth Branagh, who directed the movie.

The movie features a cast and creative team from Ireland, including Belfast-born Branagh, acclaimed Dublin playwright and screenwriter Conor McPherson and lead actors Ferdia Shaw from Wexford, Lara McDonnell from Dublin and Colin Farrell.

Author Eoin Colfer hails from County Wexford in Ireland's Ancient East, a region defined by a rich history, home to 5,000-year old Neolithic monuments, hundreds of castles and a world-renowned tradition of storytelling.

His *Artemis Fowl* books were inspired by the many facets of life growing up in a destination so steeped in stories.

"Ireland is the most magical place on earth and that's what we get from the Irish mythology, that we were the last people to commune with the fairies before they went underground," he said.

One of the places that became a key site in the story is Artemis' home, Fowl Manor, which was inspired by the real-life Loftus Hall, a mansion on the Hook Peninsula in County Wexford and where Eoin Colfer worked as a teenager.

"It was made much easier to write that book when you have the physical place in your mind and you know all

the hallways and the tunnels and the secrets," he said.

Kenneth Branagh echoes the sense of place and legend that Ireland embodies.

"You've only got to go to a place like The Giant's Causeway to believe that fairies exist in Ireland because somehow that incredible landscape was created," he said.

The UNESCO World Heritage Site in County Antrim is one of the most famous visitor attractions in Europe. The thousands of hexagonal basalt columns tumbling down into the Atlantic Ocean date back to a volcanic age almost 60 million years ago and were said to have been created by two warring giants.

■ ireland.com



Loftus Hall in Co. Wexford. Pictures courtesy Tourism Ireland



HOW SMART ARE YOU?

Our popular *Traveltease* quiz runs every week on our website, but we thought we'd give everyone a chance to see how much they know about travel. Can you get the correct answers without Google?

1. How much did it cost to fly from Sydney to Melbourne in 1953?

- a. £7
- b. £8
- c. £9
- d. £10

2. Celebrity chef Colin Fassnidge was born in which city?

- a. Belfast
- b. Dublin
- c. Cork
- d. Galway

3. Which of these countries does not border Argentina?

- a. Chile
- b. Uruguay
- c. Bolivia
- d. Peru

4. According to the World Economic Forum, which country has the world's fastest trains?

- a. China
- b. France
- c. Japan
- d. India



5. On which Hawaiian island is the capital, Honolulu?

- a. Maui
- b. Kauai
- c. Oahu
- d. Hawaii

6. Who was named 'Australian of the Year' in 2015?

- a. Rosie Batty
- b. David Morrison
- c. Adam Goodes
- d. Jackie French

7. Which Pacific Island nation is home to the world's largest lagoon?

- a. Fiji
- b. Tahiti
- c. Samoa
- d. New Caledonia



8. Torstein Hagen is the Chairman of which cruise company?

- a. Viking
- b. Silversea
- c. MSC
- d. Scenic

9. What is the deepest lake in Australia?

- a. Lake Argyle
- b. Lake St Clair
- c. Lake Gordon
- d. Lake Pedder

10. Which of these Indian cities is furthest north?

- a. New Delhi
- b. Kolkata
- c. Mumbai
- d. Chennai

11. The Rand is the national currency of which country?

- a. Belgium
- b. The Netherlands
- c. South Africa
- d. Botswana

12. The Pan American highway is the world's longest 'motorable' road.

- a. True
- b. False

13. Which of these is NOT an official residence of the Queen?

- a. Buckingham Palace
- b. Hillsborough Castle
- c. Windsor Castle
- d. Chequers

14. What is the smallest U.S. state by land mass?

- a. Wyoming
- b. Rhode Island
- c. Delaware
- d. Connecticut

15. Dushanbe is the capital of which country?

- a. Kyrgyzstan
- b. Uzbekistan
- c. Turkmenistan
- d. Tajikistan

For more quiz action, head to our website www.traveltalkmag.com.au or look out for *Traveltease* every Thursday.

ANSWERS: 1b, 2b, 3d, 4a, 5c, 6a, 7d, 8a, 9b, 10a, 11c, 12a, 13d, 14b, 15d.

We're all in this
Travel*talk*
TOGETHER



*Lake Hillier, Esperance, WA. Photo
courtesy Tourism WA/Jaimen Hudson*