

Australia's favourite travel news magazine

Traveltalk

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We're all in this

A close-up photograph of a person's hands, wearing a dark blue jacket, gently cupping a small, clear glass globe of the Earth. The globe shows the continents and is set against a dark, blurred background.

TOGETHER

Special: 28-PAGE ONLINE ISSUE!

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 CONTRIBUTORS

Gaya Avery, Caroline Cox

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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A message from the *Traveltalk* team

THE WORLD has changed dramatically since the last edition of *Traveltalk* rolled off the press.

MILLIONS OF AUSTRALIANS have been affected as the country deals with COVID-19 and the drastic measures now in place designed to keep us safe.

The travel industry has been particularly badly hit, with travel agents, wholesalers, airlines, cruise companies, hotel chains and DMO's suffering through the worldwide travel ban.

But while day to day lives have changed, nothing has changed our commitment to travel and the highly skilled and dedicated people who work in this industry. We've been part of the travel landscape for almost 50 years and know that we are needed now more than ever.

That's why we've decided to continue publishing Australia's favourite travel news magazine because, like Arnold Schwarzenegger said, we wholeheartedly believe that travel "will be back!"

So until we've beaten this virus – and we will – *Traveltalk* will be an *online* magazine, packed with all the essential news, features and stories to keep you informed, inspired and entertained.

Traveltalk is also supporting the "postpone, don't cancel" initiative which is asking consumers not to abandon their holiday bookings. If this situation has taught us anything it is that – now more than ever – the value of booking with a travel professional is paramount.

Agents have been working tirelessly to help their clients, all the while literally watching their income go out the door. We've also had e-mails from consumers who have booked their travel online and now find themselves with little or no avenue for refunds.

When the international travel ban is lifted and people do start travelling again, travel agents are going to be a hot commodity, so we need to support them now when they need it most.

We hope everyone in the travel industry remains safe and well during these difficult times. Our community is tight-knit and resilient and you can rest assured *Traveltalk* will be there, supporting Australia's travel industry for many years to come. ■

Silversea's top dogs enjoy top nosh



Above left: Adam Armstrong, Silversea MD, Darlene Santler, eCruising and Latitude 33, and David Brandon, Savenio. Right: Opera in the Royal Botanic Gardens

SILVERSEA CRUISES has rewarded its top travel agency achievers for the highest sales made each year with a glittering night on the town.

The company's inaugural 'Campioni di Silversea' event was held in Melbourne, with representatives from the top 20 agencies flown via business class for a progressive luxury dinner around the city.

The indulgent program of events included helicopter transfers to Crown Towers, hair and make-up pamper sessions and Rolls-Royce transfers to the evening dinner locations.

Entrée was served in the Royal Botanic Gardens with string quartet and opera singer who serenaded with Italian opera from a gondola. The main course was at the award-winning Grossi Florentino with paired wines, followed by awards for each agent.

Dessert came at Brunetti, Flinders Lane, featuring a huge Silversea ice sculpture and an Italian accordion player, accompanied by cocktails and Italian desserts.

"It was such a privilege to reward our top 20 selling agencies in 2019 for their dedication to Silversea at such a special inaugural event," said Steve Richards, Director of Sales – Australia and New Zealand, Silversea Cruises.

TEARS SHED AFTER KIND GESTURE



A RANDOM act of kindness has left one travel agent in tears during the corona virus pandemic.

Sue Wynne (pictured) from Corowa Travel Link was deeply moved when one of the owners of a local caravan park unexpectedly handed her a \$150 voucher for a meal at the nearby All Saints Estate.

"It was a beautiful gesture especially given they are not even current clients," said Sue. "They just wanted us to know that they care. It made me shed a tear of pure happiness."

Sue added that Corowa is a small town where "everyone is hanging in there together and trying to be positive.

"I'm sitting here surrounded by wine, gin and chocolates from people who have stopped by to say "we know you're doing it tough, keep your head up""



Agents praised for dedication

THE TEAM at Cook Islands Tourism have praised the work of Aussie travel agents as they work tirelessly for clients during the COVID-19 crisis.

“Our team wishes to put a shout out to all travel agents near and far across Australia and to do this we felt by taking just one example of what agents do behind the scenes would be a great way to show appreciation and pay respect to all travel agents,” said Crystal Kranz, Marketing

Manager at Cook Islands Tourism.

Luke Jones from Flight Centre World Square in Sydney has become a self-selected extension of the Cook Islands team, going above and beyond to support travellers’ needs.

“Travel agents are not just audit takers, we’re here for our clients, partners and associates on a personal level for the love of travel,” said Luke. “We just have to ride out the storm, as Australians are

resilient, and people will travel again once restrictions are lifted.”

Meanwhile a group of 10 agents managed to enjoy a six-day famil on the Cook Islands before border restrictions were put in place, exploring both Rarotonga and Aitutaki.

Highlights on Rarotonga included a Night Paddle Tour, snorkelling in Muri Lagoon and a cultural night out with Te Vara Nui’s overwater night show and buffet.



TM TRIO SAMPLE THE SUITE LIFE

THREE TRAVELMANAGERS took part in what was probably the last famil before the government’s ban on travel came into being.

The trio were among the eight travel agency participants who stepped aboard Qatar Airways’ day trip famil from Sydney to Canberra. The group experienced the airline’s newly-delivered A350-1000 aircraft, and more specifically, the business class ‘Q-Suites’.

“Experiencing the ‘Q-Suites’ has totally sold me on this product for my business class clients,” said Julianne Gazal-Rizk, who is TravelManagers’ representative for Willoughby in Sydney.

The famil also included a site inspection of the Midnight Hotel. Pictured left are TM’s Julianne Gazal-Rizk, Louise McCarthy and Lindy Hill with Adam Joseph, Qatar Airways’ Sales Executive – NSW.

Top tips to keep you connected

Here, *Traveltalk's* digital Managing Editor GAYA AVERY explains why digital networking now is more important than ever and how to make working from home work for you.



WHENEVER I slacked off at school, mum used to warn that I'd end up stacking shelves. Who would have thought that that would now be one of the most desirable, important and secure jobs available?

An unprecedented number of people across the globe have or will lose their jobs because of measures to control the COVID-19 pandemic. It's depressing and terrifying for everyone.

And to top it all off we're unable to drown our sorrows with our mates (in person). But you can still reach out digitally.

ESCAPE

There is nothing wrong with blocking out any mention of COVID-19 and bingeing on nothing TV shows. Sometimes it's what your sanity needs.

But instead of watching on your own, organise a time with friends or family when you're all watching the same series and live chat through it. It's like your

own personal *Gogglebox* without all the annoying personalities.

This concept works for home schooling too.

STUDY

This is one of the rare times when you could be out of work with your old colleagues. Why not take the time to update your skill set and do an online course?

Doing it with someone else will help keep you motivated and you can call each other when you need some help.

ENGAGE

Update your LinkedIn profile, publish some interesting articles and run in the circles in which you'd like to work.

When things pick up (which they will), make sure you're front of mind of potential employers.



Here is Gaya's essential guide to working from home

Invest in appropriate workwear

Someone once wrote that the secret to successfully working from home involves getting dressed up. Bah humbug, I say.

Maybe at first you'll pop on a casual Friday ensemble but soon you'll be in trackies and ugs and the world will be a better place for it.

That said, invest in a fabulous long coat or cardigan that can be thrown over the rattiest of pyjamas and you'll be ready for the odd urgent video chat and an unforeseen trip to the shops. Choose clothes that are suitable for both bedtime and FaceTime.

Hit mute when it's not your turn to speak

You cannot control if your dogs start a choral group or if, as happened yesterday, your kid shouts that she's done a poo and there's no toilet paper. You can however control who has to hear it.

If you're not speaking, hit MUTE. Just make sure you unmute yourself every now and then so you can make the odd non-committal grunt.

Adopt a dog

If you don't have as many people to talk to during the day as I do, adopt a dog for your sanity.

Talking in a high pitched baby voice to a kelpie-wannabe Jack Russell is less odd than asking yourself if you're ready for lunch.

Exercise when you would have commuted

If your old commute was half an hour, take your dog for a walk for the same amount of time. It will likely be the only time you're not looking at a screen.

Set your hours

People often think working from home is cruisey. The reality is that you often don't stop.

Take your chargers out of your bedroom and charge your devices overnight so you're not tempted to check your emails last thing at night and first thing in the morning.

Bribe your children

With everyone at home now be ready and willing to bribe your kids with whatever keeps them quiet if you need to make a phone or video call.

Organise your meals as you normally would

You don't have to prepare all your meals at the beginning of the day, but it's a good idea to know what you're going to do for lunch so that you're not spending hours in front of the fridge wondering what to eat.

And if it helps, write DO NOT TOUCH on a tub of yoghurt and eat it illicitly.

TALK

I used to chat to my sister-in-law once a week. We now chat almost daily. She is a fabulous listener and a great voice of reason.

I have another annoying friend who just sends messages of all the delicious food she is making (it's like torture). But it's also a great way to get some new recipes.

Staying connected to the world outside your house will help you look after your mental health and that of others.

HELP

Reach out to local nursing homes or churches and ask if they need (or if they know of anyone in the community that needs) your help. Sometimes it's just calling some of the residents in nursing homes who may not be allowed visitors anymore, or picking up a few extra things in the grocery store.

We'd love to hear your stories, thoughts and tips about working from home.

Drop us an e-mail at editorial@traveltalkmag.com.au

Play connect five with Bench and **win**



THE TEAM at Bench Africa is reaching out and staying connected through their passion for nature, travel and Africa.

Despite social distancing, the company has come up with five rather unusual ways to stay connected with their trade partners, bringing the wilds of Africa into their homes.

1 BREATHE WITH YOUR BENCH BDM

Anji Johnson is expanding the traditional scope of a safari, inviting yoga, meditation and mindfulness into your home a couple of times a week to create an experience and escape that nourishes and heals your mind, body and soul.



#patapatachallenge

2 A KENYAN COCKTAIL

Join Bonnie in her backyard as she hosts a cocktail making class, demonstrating how to make a 'dawa', which means 'medicine' in Swahili.



3 TAKE THE QUARANTINE QUIZ

Brush up on your Africa travel knowledge with Bench Africa's Quarantine Quiz, where the top three winners will get a virtual hug and a prize pack.



4 TAKE A VIRTUAL GAME DRIVE

On April 21, join Nicky Oosthuizen on a simulated game drive around the African savannah. To keep you on your toes, Nicky will be throwing a few fibs in there and the person who points out the most fibs will win a prize.

5 TAKE THE PATA PATA CHALLENGE

Bench is inviting you to have a dance party and bring the beat of Africa into your living rooms. Upload your entry to social media with the #patapatachallenge hashtag.

"During this time of uncertainty, we find genuine comfort in knowing that Africa continues to remain wild and extraordinary and so we urge you to 'paws' and dream with us," said Cameron Neill, Bench Africa's General Manager.

"These are challenging times and our thoughts are with you and your families. Take care of each other, be responsible and stay safe.

"When it's safe to do so we will still be here waiting to introduce you to the magic of Africa, when travel will be more meaningful than ever."

■ *Join the Bench Africa Agents Facebook group for this isolation escapism.*



ScoMo predicts bright future

THE TRAVEL and tourism sector will be among the big resurgent industries when the corona virus pandemic is over, according to Prime Minister Scott Morrison.

Speaking during a webinar organised by Tourism Australia, Mr Morrison acknowledged the hardship currently being faced by agents and those in the travel industry.

“This is a crisis that the tourism industry

could never have imagined and it is causing, I know, incredible hardship all around the country,” he said.

“What this virus has taken from you in these weeks past and those who were in bushfire affected areas before that, it has just been the worst of times.

“I want you to get that business back and I want you to get the visitors back, and as soon as we can do that I can assure

you we will be going there. So thanks for hanging in there.”

Mr Morrison said the JobKeeper payment scheme would help keep the Australian economy going and allow firms to retain their employees, ready for a return to work.

“When we do emerge on the other side, our tourism and hospitality and travel sector will be one of the big resurgent industries.”

MEASURES NEEDED FOR RECOVERY

THE WORLD Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC) is calling for a series of measures to be taken to help the industry recover from the corona virus disaster.

The organisation has predicted some 50 million jobs in the travel and tourism sector are at risk due to the global pandemic.

The measures it wants governments to introduce are:

- * **Improve travel facilitation** – remove or simplify visas wherever possible, reduce the cost and improve processing times where practical, accept other visas when appropriate and introduce more efficient technologies for seamless and secure travel
- * **Remove barriers** – ensure that unnecessary barriers are removed or

relaxed to alleviate pressure at ports and airports

- * **Ease fiscal policies** – reduce and remove travellers’ taxes which increases the cost of travel, e.g. Air Passenger Duty and similar airport, port and hospitality taxes around the world
- * **Introduce incentives** – introduce relief and incentives to support

business continuity for companies which have been most negatively impacted

- * **Support destinations** – increase budgets and assign resources for promotion, marketing and product development purposes in destinations when they are ready to welcome visitors again.



Melbourne

AUSSIES PLEDGE HOME SUPPORT

NOT SO long ago, Australians were pledging support to bushfire affected communities, with 53 per cent saying they planned to spend their tourism dollars locally.

And then COVID-19 hit and now the most honourable thing Aussies can do is to stay home.

But according to new information from *MyTravelResearch.com* and research platform *Glow*, Australians haven't forgotten their pledges of support and plan to travel domestically when safe and allowed to do so.

"Our data shows that Australians are still ready and willing to support the bushfire affected communities when circumstances allow," said Tim Clover, *Glow* Chief Executive.

"Whether they seek out regional stays for work or leisure in less populated areas or re-organise cancelled overseas holidays locally, Australians have not forgotten about their previous pledges of support, even though they can't fulfill them right now."

In the coming six months, if they have been told it is okay to travel, 43 per cent of Australians plan to get a local break in, 49 per cent saying they would consider

leisure travel to less populated areas to lower their risk of contracting the virus.

However, only 20 per cent of Australians are looking to travel overseas during the same period.

"While the fall out of this global crisis leaves devastating impacts across the travel industry, the shift in focus from international air travel to local trips – perhaps starting with day or 'nanocations' when it is safe to do so – could provide a beacon of hope in an otherwise heartbreaking year for our regional communities," said Carolyn Childs, *MyTravelResearch* Chief Executive.

"And frankly, Australians will all need a holiday! To keep that beacon alight – Australian tourism needs to keep building our connection to our customers."



Sydney



Rottneest Island



IN BRIEF

As part of its global efforts to bring home Austrian and EU citizens, Austrian Airlines completed an 18 hour non-stop journey from Vienna to Sydney – the longest flight ever operated by the Lufthansa Group Airline. The B777 aircraft returned to Vienna carrying more than 250 passengers.



AFTA keeps the pressure on

THE GOVERNMENT'S JobKeeper Payment has been welcomed as a step in the right direction by the Australian Federation of Travel Agents (AFTA).

The travel sector is in a unique position due to the unprecedented shutdown of international and domestic travel.

AFTA is working closely with Government and key decision makers across the business community to deliver even more support than the corona virus wage stimulus package.

"While we are still unpacking the detail, the wage subsidy is definitely a very welcome step," said Jayson Westbury, Chief Executive AFTA.

"The JobKeeper announcement is a nation saving measure and will enable Australian travel agents to maintain a connection where possible with their valued and experienced staff.

"We will continue to cover everything you need to know including government support, workplace law, compliance plus the practical steps you can and need to take.

"These are times like nothing we have ever experienced. We are here for our members and we will get through this together."

AFTA is implementing a number of measures to support ATAS accredited travel agents and the wider sector.

- * Membership fees will not be charged for the next billing year
- * The introduction of significant austerity measures across AFTA to reduce outgoings
- * The primary focus for the coming months is on industry support and government engagement to secure the necessary support, assistance and reforms
- * A draw down on AFTA's investment fund to fund critical operational costs for ongoing support of members
- * ATAS accreditation to switch to a monitor and support mode
- * Cancellation of NTIA 2020 (and awards) with a recovery event to be planned for November 2020 subject to the status of the industry and the COVID-19 situation.

"These are common sense decisions which will make a real difference to agents and sponsors while ensuring AFTA is able to continue advocating for our members and their customers at this critical time," said Westbury.





Brett Jardine, CATO MD

CATO planning for the future

THE COUNCIL of Australian Tour Operators (CATO) has held crisis planning talks with its members to support their short and long term needs.

“Our sector will be the key to recovery,” said Brett Jardine, CATO MD. “We need to take a unified approach and work together to ensure the survival of our industry so we are ready

to help travellers with their plans when the timing is right.”

Members heard from an expert advisory team including insurance and legal specialists who were brought in to provide recommendations on how to best support travellers and ensure they could enjoy their holidays at a future time.

CATO reinforced the position that the provision of credits to travellers is preferred where possible.

It was agreed that this approach would deliver the best outcomes for travellers and may also help to protect the financial health of tour operators and wholesalers which in turn will assist their staff, their travel agent partners and also suppliers such as airlines and hotels.

“We are at a critical juncture. Working together with our members and other like-minded organisations, we need to enact smart decision-making to ensure that the travel industry survives this immediate crisis.

“We also need to start planning for the rebound which will undoubtedly happen to make sure we are ready to help our clients reboot their holiday plans and reignite the outbound travel sector.”

■ cato.travel

KEEP IN TOUCH TO STAY STRONG

TRAVEL OPERATORS who continue to touch base with their consumers now will emerge from this pandemic in a stronger position.

That’s the view of Global Data, the UK-based analyst firm, who point to the COVID-19 International Travellers Guide app as just one of the initiatives travel companies are taking to build deeper relationships with their consumer base.

“After a long period of social distancing and self-isolation, consumer attitudes and the dynamics of the outbound travel market will undoubtedly have changed dramatically when we emerge from this crisis,” said Johanna Bonhill-Smith, Travel and Tourism Analyst at GlobalData.

“Simple initiatives that travel businesses can offer now to sustain their brand awareness and visibility over the coming months will help them maintain a competitive advantage in the future.”

Australia shows the love

TOURISM AUSTRALIA has released a video entitled *With Love From Aus* on social media.

The video is designed to show Australians and the rest of the world that the country will be ready to welcome visitors once the COVID-19 crisis is over.

"While there are many restrictions on travel and tourism right now, people's appetite for travel hasn't disappeared," commented Phillipa Harrison, Managing Director, Tourism Australia.

"We want everyone to keep dreaming about the unique experiences and beautiful places across Australia that will be waiting for them on the other side of the corona virus pandemic."

TA will be continuing with its series of webinars aimed at keeping those in the industry informed on all the latest developments.



IN BRIEF

Australian distillers have been shifting their production focus from spirits to hand sanitiser. So far, Manly Spirits Co and Archie Rose in Sydney and Adelaide's Prohibition Liquor Co have each released their own lines of hand sanitisers, which are available to purchase online.

Whitsundays



CORONA VIRUS RESOURCES

THERE ARE a number of dedicated resources available for travel businesses to access during the COVID-19 pandemic:

The *Australia.gov.au* site is regularly updated with the latest corona virus news and advice from government agencies across Australia.

The *Business.gov.au* site provides a summary and quick links to financial assistance, eligibility and timing for the new government support for Australian businesses.

The National Bushfire Recovery Agency has created a set of factsheets that outline

the combined Australian Government support available to those affected by bushfires, drought, flood and corona virus.

The Treasury has created a series of factsheets to provide information about the JobKeeper payment for employers, employees and other frequently asked questions.

Viator is offering complimentary one-on-one 30-minute product optimising training sessions for tourism businesses.

BBH Labs has published a guide with key principles, thinking and data points on marketing in the time of corona virus.

The road to recovery

In this exclusive interview with *Traveltalk*, Gai Tyrrell, Managing Director Australasia of Globus family of brands, reveals the impact corona virus has had on the company.

Predicting that travel will bounce back from the crisis, Ms Tyrrell highlights the extensive measures Globus have taken to protect consumers and how travel agents were “our first priority”.





Gai Tyrrell, Managing Director
Australasia of Globus

Q: How has corona virus impacted your business life?

A: Changed it completely right now! Overnight we had to find new ways of working remotely to support our industry partners and customers through this crisis.

To say we've been nimble is an understatement! But even though we're all apart, everyone is working solidly and impressively as a team.

Q: What reaction have you been getting from Globus customers?

A: It's been heartwarming and outstanding. Our 'Peace of Mind' plan has been so well received and appreciated at a depth I've never seen before in my career.

We took a major, voluntarily decision to pause travel to all destinations until June 30, 2020, across all of our brands - Globus, Cosmos, Monograms and Avalon Waterways. At the same time we announced a 'Peace of Mind' plan for all of our impacted guests.

It allows them to reschedule their planned trip to any destination offered by any of the Globus family of brands through 2022 without any cancellation fees. We also provide a bonus credit of up to \$300 per person when they rebook their trip.

Q: Are you concerned that the brand will be irretrievably damaged by this crisis?

A: On the contrary - Globus is a legacy brand, we are currently safe, we are secure and we are solvent. There is deep trust in our company and our 92 year history. It's in times of adversity that strong companies like ours stand out.

Q: How are you passing the time in self-isolation?

A: "Passing time" doesn't quite describe it! With numerous industry partners and

more than 100 team members across Australia and New Zealand and all of us working remotely, each day is pretty much a constant schedule of phone calls, Zoom meetings and conference calls with our teams both here and in other time zones.

I'm working from my lounge room in Sydney. In the background my 15-year-old son Charlie, who is normally at high school, is keeping it real with the Xbox and screaming excitement at the NBL.

In the few moments that I have had to ponder, I'm waiting for the true colour of my hair to present itself!

Q: How will the travel industry recover from this crisis?

A: That's a big question and while there will be structural change for some firms and some sections of the industry may take longer to recover, as a whole our industry sells dreams and people will never stop dreaming about travel.

Borders will reopen, hopefully sooner rather than later, confidence will return, airlines will fly again and people will travel. It will all come back.

Government economic initiatives for business and the stimulus payment to individuals will also help support recovery in travel.

Q: Are there any positives that can be taken from this situation?

A: Absolutely. In business and in communities, this is a leveler like nothing before. We have all learned so much more about each other, I'm seeing a lot of kindness, great compassion, tolerance and compromise. I think that will continue long after the global pandemic.

In so many ways, we have all been brought to our knees by COVID-19. No-one is immune: it's like a massive reset

“In the few moments that I have had to ponder, I'm waiting for the true colour of my hair to present itself!”

button on what really matters in our global community and how we must all work together. I've met neighbours in our local park that I had never met before!

Q: Has Globus done anything specific to remain in touch with travel agents?

A: Travel agents were our first priority. They are part of our family and the connection to our guests before we welcome them onboard.

Australia still has more travel agents per capita than anywhere else in the world and it is absolutely vital that we help our agents to in turn look after their customers.

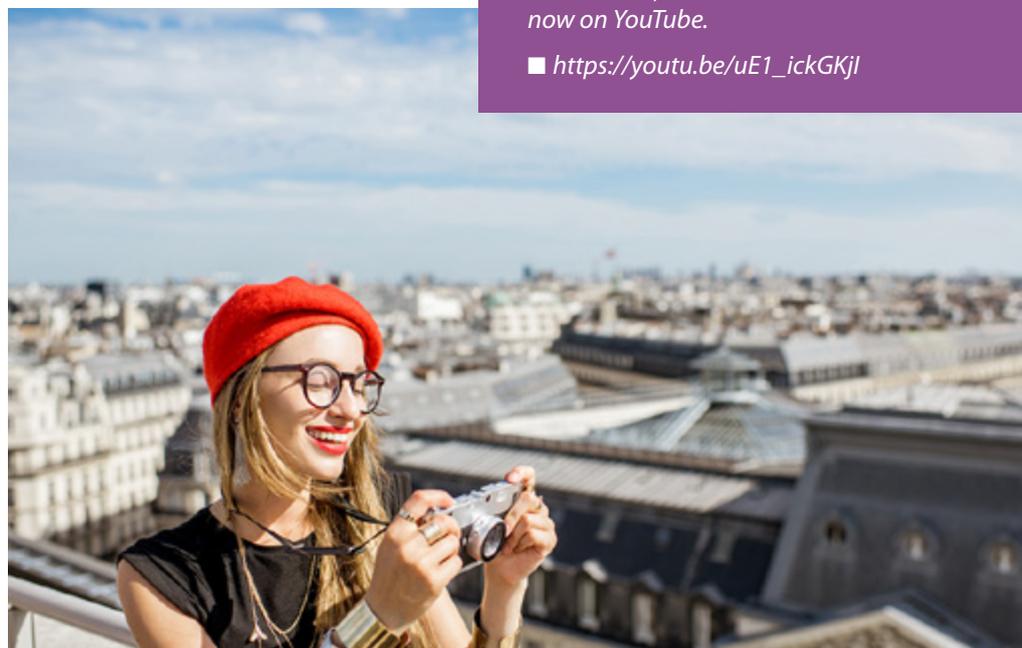
Hopefully we have demonstrated that through speed to market with our 'Peace of Mind' program and through our communication.

Regardless of regular job roles our team members have all been on the phones working as quickly as possible to reach out to agents asking how we can support them.

■ globusfamily.com.au

Check out *Dreaming Doesn't Stop*, Globus' inspirational message to the travellers and travel colleagues of the world, available to watch now on YouTube.

■ https://youtu.be/uE1_ickGKjI



Agents hold the key to recovery

TRAVEL AGENTS and the wider cruise community will be key to recovery after the COVID-19 pandemic.

That's the message from Joel Katz, Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA) Managing Director Australasia, who is rallying industry supporters to make their presence known.

Mr Katz said the cruise industry faced a lack of understanding about its size and economic significance, even after decades of strong growth in Australia.

The number of Australians taking a cruise reached a record 1.35 million in 2018, while the cruise industry contributed more than \$5 billion to the Australian economy last financial year.

The organisation has written to travel agent members in Australia seeking their support to inform others of the significance of cruising.

"We'd like your help in speaking out about how deeply rooted cruising is in our part of the world, and how vital it is to our tourism industry and the wider economy," Mr Katz wrote.

"Although we are in a challenging news environment, our wider CLIA community is well placed to tell a more positive story."

Mr Katz said cruise lines had spent decades investing in Australia, supporting jobs and creating business opportunities throughout a wide variety of industries.

"Cruising helps sustain jobs across a range of sectors – travel agencies, tour operators, guides, transport workers, hoteliers, maritime workers, technical suppliers and the many local food and wine providers who stock our ships."

Agents are encouraged to write to their state and federal MPs, create social media posts, reach out to clients and colleagues, and create videos to share online, utilising the hashtag #WeAreCruise.

"We need to show how extensive our community is. We can't be demonised, we need recognition for what we've achieved.

"We're an industry that has put people first and we continue to work in support of our people – guests, crew and communities.

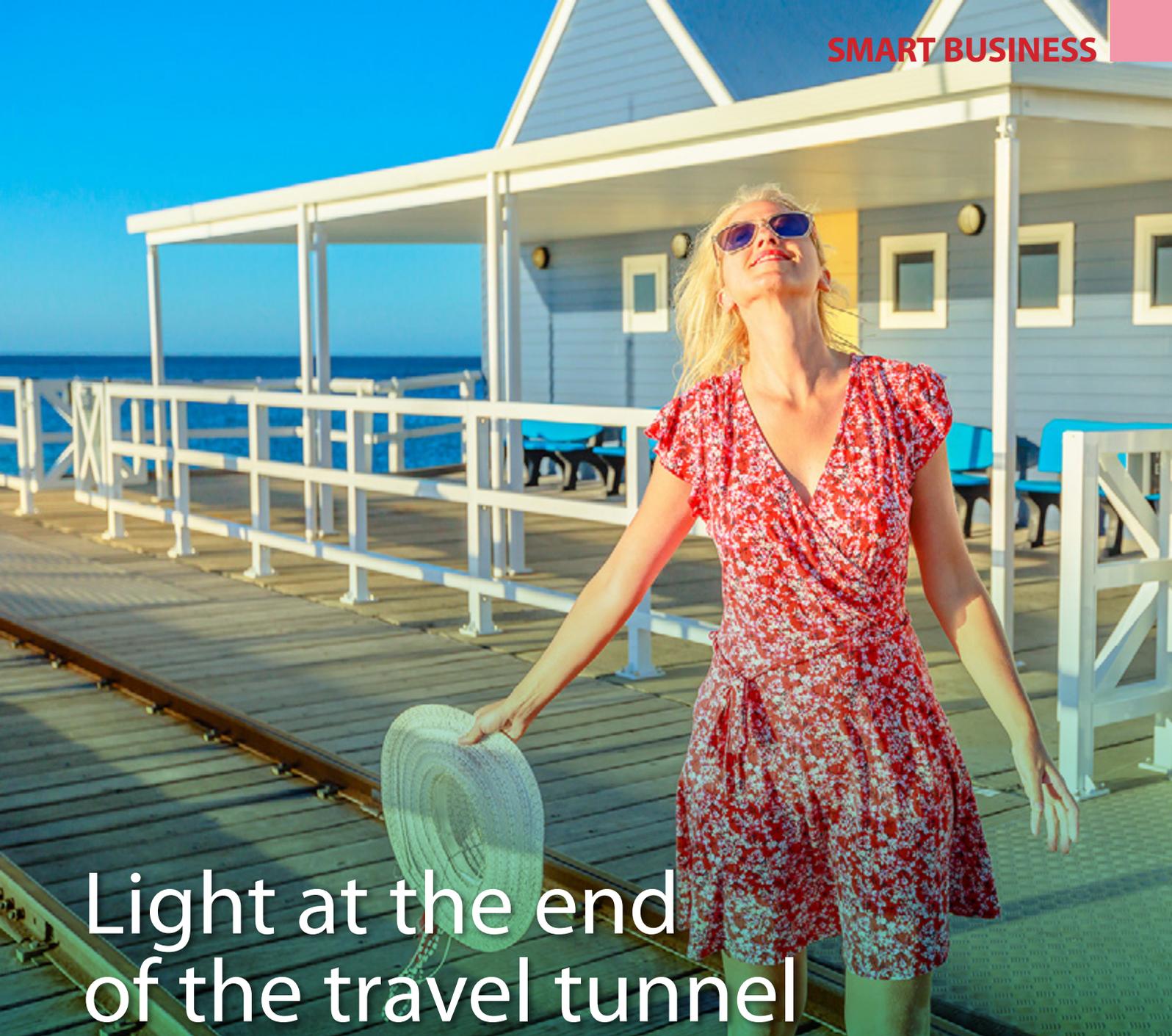
"We're a resilient industry with an enormous number of supporters and by uniting our community we can be confident we'll overcome these challenges in the long term."

■ cruising.org.au



Joel Katz, Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA) Managing Director Australasia





Light at the end of the travel tunnel

COMPANIES SHOULD be prepared for a strong economic rebound once the corona virus pandemic is over.

That's the encouraging message from one of the world's leading independent advisory firms.

In its latest analysis of COVID-19 and its effects on global markets, Oxford Economics said that while there will be a lot of short term pain for industries, including travel, there is light at the end of the tunnel.

"Attention is understandably focused on limiting the damage from the short-term effects of the corona virus outbreak," the UK-based firm said.

"But it's likely that, once disruption and uncertainty fade, the rebound in global economic activity will be strong. It's important for firms to position themselves for such a recovery."

According to Oxford Economics,

“In the past 200 years, short recessions have typically been followed by robust recovery.”

historical evidence supports this view and is reflected in its baseline forecast and scenario analysis.

"In the past 200 years, short recessions have typically been followed by robust recovery," it said.

"Long-term impacts from natural disasters have generally only been evident for specific hazards. With the notable exception of AIDS, longer-term pandemic effects also appear to have

been contained."

Oxford says that polls taken during the 2003 SARS and 2009 influenza outbreaks flag an explanation for limited impacts.

"Public fears increased alongside rising infection rates, but they dissipated promptly as outbreaks came under control," it explained.

"In our corona virus pandemic scenario, global growth grinds to a halt in Q2 2020 as the world economy succumbs to recession, but it then rebounds to a rapid five per cent pace of expansion within a year.

"With much of the initial output loss recovered in a relatively short period of time, long-term impacts are limited."

But Oxford Economics says that disruption could still be longer than expected, while surveys highlight possible longer lasting risks in some countries.

■ oxfordeconomics.com



EYE IN THE SKYE

SKYE SUITES is fast-tracking the opening of its third hotel in Sydney to cater for an increase in demand from long-stay guests.

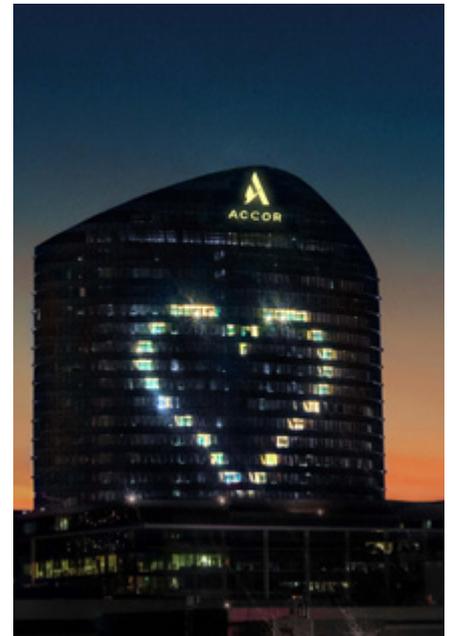
SKYE Suites Green Square is set to officially open as a hotel in July, but will now offer luxurious serviced-apartment stays of three months or more to long-stay residents.

The property is set within the new \$575 million architectural precinct, Infinity by Crown Group.

"This is the most exciting opening of 2020," said Pierre Abrahamse, Crown Group Chief Operating Officer.

"Residents and guests will have the opportunity to stay in Sydney's most iconic new architectural creation, created by world-renowned Koichi Takada Architects.

"They will have all of Sydney on their doorstep, with the city and airport only minutes away."



OFFERING SHELTER

ACCOR IS providing shelter in the midst of the COVID-19 crisis, working with government authorities and community organisations to make its accommodation and services available to those most in need.

Accor hotels are sheltering front-line health workers, the homeless and disadvantaged, vulnerable families and returning residents who are required to go into quarantine for 14 days.

Airbnb hosts are also offering more than 5,000 places to stay for COVID-19 medical professionals.

Opera House hotel unveiled

A \$50 MILLION luxury hotel is being planned for the Barossa Valley in South Australia.

Warren Randall, owner of the Seppeltsfield winery and one of Australia's largest wine barons, wants to create a national icon for South Australia, according to *The Lead South Australia*.

To be named Oscar Seppeltsfield, the 70-room Luxury Hotels Australia project is expected to begin welcoming guests in 2022.

"A Sydney Opera House for the Barossa," said Randall.

"Oscar will complete the grand vision of our tourism master plan for Seppeltsfield to become the most desirable epicurean destination for tourists worldwide."

"The addition of this luxury hotel will elevate Seppeltsfield to one of the top five vineyards in the world, in turn lifting Australia's international wine reputation."

Construction is hoped to begin in early 2021 with the building completed some 12 months later.



RENOS GO AHEAD REGARDLESS

LUXURY THAI resort Pimalai Resort & Spa is forging ahead with recovery plans despite the closure of Koh Lanta Island in Krabi until April 30.

The property, which opened almost 20 years ago, has started full renovations of 20 of its hillside ocean-view villas with private pools that sit at the top of indigenous Ton Yang trees that are 80 metres tall and more than 100 years old.

The design concept offers bright, modern interiors inspired by marine colours, contours and movement. The resort is also conceptualising the first wedding chapel on the island.

"The vision of Pimalai has always been far sighted," said Patrice Landrein, Pimalai Resort & Spa General Manager.

"It is for this reason we do not panic, but think carefully, take care of our people and consider the future.

"We came here to create a private, service-driven, nature-inspired experience. This is now more relevant than ever before – and we will continue to move forward with our philosophy and prepare for guests when they travel again."

MEDICS GET BIG DONATION

THE FULLERTON Hotel Sydney has joined with a charitable foundation to donate 8,000 respirators to Royal North Shore Hospital in Sydney.

A joint venture with the The Ng Teng Fong Charitable Foundation, the gift supports efforts in combating corona virus.

"It is important that our frontline health professionals are protected," said Mark Burns, General Manager of The Fullerton Hotel Sydney.

"We are grateful for their tireless efforts on behalf of our community."

The hospital is at the forefront of treating COVID-19 patients and in acute need of medical supplies.

"We would like to express our most sincere thanks to the medical practitioners, who have been working round the clock to save lives," said Daryl Ng, Director of the Ng Teng Fong Charitable Foundation, which supports education, youth development and community services.

"It is more important than ever that we join hands as one global community and care for each other."



FACING THE PLANE TRUTH

AIRLINES ARE calling on governments to provide immediate financial aid to help them remain viable businesses able to lead the recovery when the pandemic is contained.

The International Air Transport Association (IATA) is calling for direct financial support, loans, loan guarantees and support for the corporate bond market, and tax relief.

The call comes as IATA estimates some 25 million jobs are at risk of disappearing

with plummeting demand for air travel amid the COVID-19 crisis.

“There are no words to adequately describe the devastating impact of COVID-19 on the airline industry,” said Alexandre de Juniac, IATA’s Director General and CEO.

“Airlines must be viable businesses so that they can lead the recovery when the pandemic is contained. A lifeline to the airlines now is critical.”

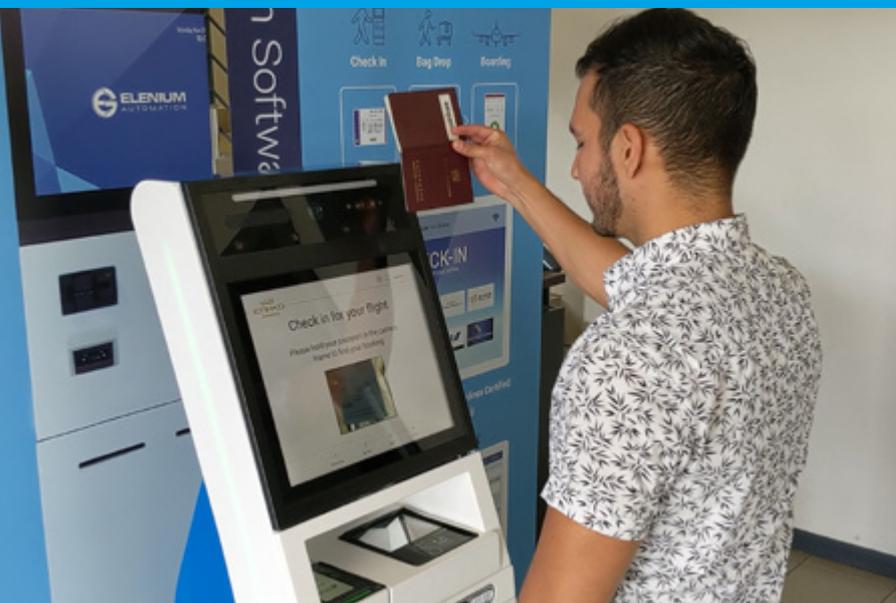
Alongside vital financial relief, the industry will also need careful planning

and coordination to ensure that airlines are ready when the time comes.

“We have never shuttered the industry on this scale before. Consequently, we have no experience in starting it up. It will be complicated,” added Mr de Juniac.

“We will have to adapt operations and processes to avoid re-infections via imported cases. And we must find a predictable and efficient approach to managing travel restrictions which need to be lifted before we can get back to work.”

Early warning system for fliers



ETIHAD AIRWAYS is partnering with an Australian company to trial new technology that could help identify medically at-risk travellers.

The contactless, self-service devices will monitor temperature, heart rate and respiratory rate.

The system, designed by Elenium Automation, will automatically suspend the self-service check-in or bag drop process if a passenger’s vital signs indicate potential symptoms of illness.

“This technology is not designed or intended to diagnose medical conditions,” said Jorg Oppermann, Vice President Hub and Midfield Operations, Etihad Airways.

“It is an early warning indicator which will help to identify people with general symptoms, so that they can be further assessed by medical experts, potentially preventing the spread of some conditions to others preparing to board flights to multiple destinations.”

■ etihad.com



WE NEED A NEW STRATEGY

Here, CAROLINE COX from TravelManagers pens an open letter to the airline sector, calling for airlines to work collaboratively on streamlining and simplifying their policies and processes.

"THE RETAIL travel industry needs your help.

We ask that you consider getting together with airline colleagues to come up with a workable strategy to help better manage the current flood of waivers, commercial policies, bulletins, exception policies, updates, etc...

The airlines deserve much praise for what they have tried to achieve during this pandemic, and the distribution system is probably the least of their worries now.

But... I cannot sit idly by and watch the impact on the health and wellbeing of people in our industry without at least trying to reach out to have some stability imposed, as we all work tirelessly to rebuild.

I am reaching out to the policy makers to talk to industry leaders and your own teams to discuss the serious health impact that the above rules are having on them.

The STRESS FACTOR almost outweighs the fear of what is ahead for us all over the next few months. This you have all unwittingly contributed to.

Consider how the distribution network is coping with the information overload, which comes in the form of daily waiver updates and hurriedly constructed policies that have not been tested and are therefore open to interpretation.

Consider the various ticket offices, BSP teams and frontline staff who are trying to decipher the information.

We understand that you need to provide best option strategies for a quick recovery from COVID-19 and we will all be on the same page to ensure we do our part to help.

Please consider the benefits and incredible difference you could make by getting together to consider carefully a one-off extraordinary way to keep the change rules simple."



Caroline Cox from TravelManagers



Okinawa World

In the blue zone



Cherry Blossom

In his first interview as the Okinawa Tourism Representative in Australia, Antonio Khattar chats to *Traveltalk* about the region's special cherry blossom season, a late-blooming girl band, adventure sports and the islands' unique place in Japan.

Q: How does Okinawa differ from the rest of Japan?

A: It's unique in terms of its culture. It's the Ryukyu Kingdom, being the last prefecture to join Japan back in the 1870s.

So they still have a lot of their unique traditions [and festivals] that travellers can experience throughout the year.

In terms of resorts, it's good for families, for activities and adventure sports like kayaking or trekking. It's also the home of karate. So there are a lot of different experiences, depending on the age and demographic.



Clockwise from left: Yambaru; Shuri-jo Castle; Kume Island; Kokusai Street; Nago Pineapple Park. All pictures courtesy Japan National Tourism Organization



Q: And its geography is also special.

A: As it's made up of sub-tropical islands, you have lots of beaches, water activities and even the earliest cherry blossoms in Japan, which start at the end of January.

So if people go earlier in the year – during the shoulder season – and they want to experience the cherry blossoms, they can do that.

Then throughout the year there are various cultural festivals, like the Naha Tug-of-War Festival, and at Shuri Castle they can experience unique dance, music and costumes.

Q: As locals live a long time in Okinawa, there might be some health benefits to visiting too?

A: Their cuisine is famous and they are in one of the world's Blue Zones (a recent term given to the five regions in the world with the longest life spans).

There's even a girl band with an average age of 84. They're called KBG84. There are lots of YouTube videos of them.

Q: Who normally travels to these Japanese islands?

A: It's the number one domestic destination for Japanese travellers. It's also quite popular with Americans, thanks to the U.S. military presence there – if you're interested in war history, there's a lot to see and do on the main island.

Q: How well known is Okinawa among Aussies?

A: Many Australians don't know that



sub-tropical Japan even exists. But then you've got the other end of the spectrum that knows about it because of Okinawans' longevity and the Second World War history.

In 2018, TripAdvisor also ranked Okinawa (Ishigaki Island) as the top emerging destination.

So it's starting to become more well known in Australia, but it's not what people in Australia would think of when they think of Japan. It's off-the-beaten-track, where you can experience something a bit more unique.

Q: How affordable is Okinawa? Is it basically on par with the rest of Japan?

A: It's comparable. It depends on the season. We recommend Aussies go in the shoulder period (Japan's spring) – and not in the peak months of July and August – so it brings the cost down.

And then it also depends on the accommodation. So you've got your higher end resorts with beach access and spas, which can be more expensive. But then you have your more traditional accommodation and options all the way down to capsules.

And of course, we have ryokan (Japanese inns) and the southern-most onsen (hot springs) in Japan.

Q: So what's the best way to access Okinawa?

A: The easiest way to get there is via Taiwan – we're only 90 minutes from Taipei.

Otherwise, with ANA or Japan Airlines, you have your Air Passes (domestic tickets similar to Japan's JR Pass for trains), which average around \$100 to \$150 per sector.

Then you can fly out of Tokyo, Osaka, Sapporo and many of the major cities in Japan.

Q: How important are travel agents and the trade to tourism?

A: We're always looking to increase the trade's knowledge, their understanding of what their clients might want.

It gives them that point of difference to their customers – to say 'you've done Kyoto, Tokyo'. Do something different. We're really focusing on the trade.

The world in your living room

With the planet in lockdown, several inventive companies have come up with virtual ways for travellers to still visit destinations around the globe. Here are just a few ideas for you to enjoy at home.

NEW YORK

EVERY YEAR, millions of visitors from all over the world travel to the Empire State Building.

While physical travel isn't currently possible, it doesn't mean you can't enjoy the spectacular views from the 86th and 102nd Floor Observatories.

Making it possible to still have a slice of New York, the ESP is providing EarthCam views of Manhattan and itself to give travellers a taste of what they can experience in person post COVID-19.

In addition to the EarthCam, the building also provides avid travellers access to an interactive audio tour available through the website or its app.

■ esbnyc.com/earthcam-empire-state-building

NEVADA

THE SILVER State is offering virtual tours of some of its most popular open areas, museums and galleries, or the chance to listen to a ranger talk about astronomy.

In Reno, there's a live webcam watching the flowing river at the Truckee River Whitewater Park, or take a virtual ride on the Heavenly Mountain rollercoaster in Lake Tahoe.

In Virginia City, meet the locals and learn about the places in this historic mining town through their "Below the Surface" videos. There's also a live webcam on its main street.

Travel the stretch of Highway 50 through Nevada, known as 'the loneliest road in America' from your lounge room through a video from Pony Express Territory.

■ travelnevada.com



IRELAND

FANCY HAVING a go at traditional Irish bread making from your very own kitchen?

Tracey's Farmhouse Kitchen (TFK) is an 18th century thatched barn on the spectacular shores of Strangford Lough in County Down.

Tourism Ireland is showcasing videos where Tracey of TFK and Catherine Fulvio of Ballyknocken House & Cookery School showcase their methods of making traditional Irish soda bread.

Bread is one of Ireland's food heroes, whether it's wheaten bread, soda bread, barmbrack or potato bread. The art of bread making is ingrained in the food culture of the island of Ireland.

"It's all very relaxed – we don't weigh or measure anything – it's a handful of this and a glug of that," said Tracey. The videos are available on Vimeo.

■ vimeo.com/tourismireland

TAHITI

TAHITI TOURISME has launched its Sunnier Days Ahead campaign to inspire future visitors.

Launching across its social media platforms, the initiative uses an array of videos and imagery with the tag line Postpone Your Trip, Don't Cancel as the first of two campaign phases.

Highlights include land-based activities, water sports, great scenery and full immersion into the French Polynesian culture.

The second installment of the campaign – Tahiti Comes To You – will launch in coming weeks and will continue to share and encourage a sense of calmness and inspiration, as well as the beauty of the Islands.

■ tahititourisme.com.au



WE'LL KEEP IT
BEAUTIFUL
FOR YOU

FIJI

TOURISM FIJI is reaching out to the industry to all unite under the banner of 'Sota tale' to deliver the collective message of optimism and confidence.

Recently launched through the organisation's social media channels, the message "Sota tale. Stay safe and we will see you soon." is being used.

"'Sota tale' is a common Fijian phrase that guests hear upon their departure from Fiji, in anticipation that they will be welcomed back to Fiji again soon," said Matthew Stoeckel, Tourism Fiji's CEO.

"It is part of Tourism Fiji's four stages to market re-entry that the organisation is implementing to return the destination to the Australian market."

■ fiji.travel

VIKING

VIKING HAS announced the official launch of Viking.TV, a new digital platform designed to provide enriching cultural content and live streaming video experiences from around the world.

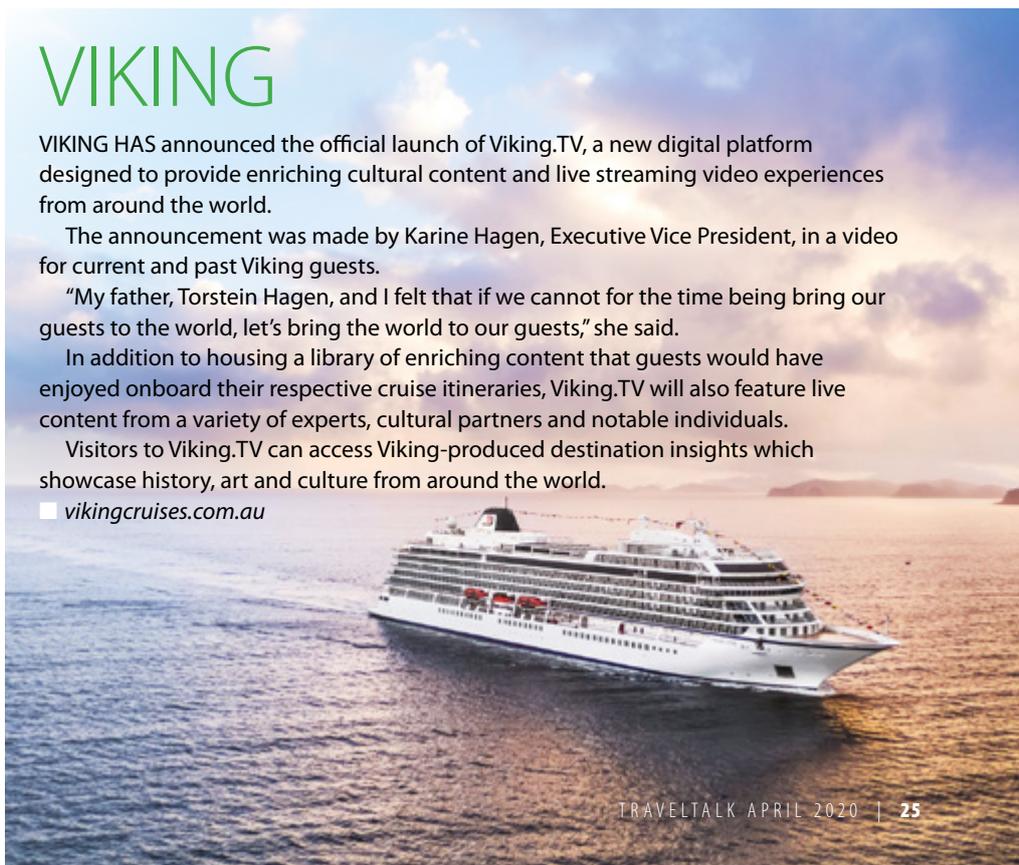
The announcement was made by Karine Hagen, Executive Vice President, in a video for current and past Viking guests.

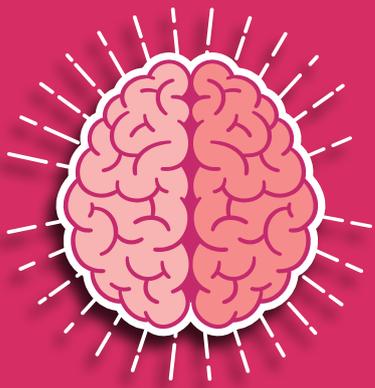
"My father, Torstein Hagen, and I felt that if we cannot for the time being bring our guests to the world, let's bring the world to our guests," she said.

In addition to housing a library of enriching content that guests would have enjoyed onboard their respective cruise itineraries, Viking.TV will also feature live content from a variety of experts, cultural partners and notable individuals.

Visitors to Viking.TV can access Viking-produced destination insights which showcase history, art and culture from around the world.

■ vikingcruises.com.au





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. Which *Absolutely Fabulous* star hosts a series of travel documentaries?

- a. Jennifer Saunders
- b. Julia Sawalha
- c. Joanna Lumley
- d. Jane Horrocks

2. Which Arabian city featured in the movie *Sex and the City 2*?

- a. Dubai
- b. Medina
- c. Abu Dhabi
- d. Muscat

3. Which city has the most fine-dining restaurants?

- a. Paris
- b. London
- c. New York
- d. Tokyo

4. According to a recent study, what is the top travel experience for Aussies aged 30-39?

- a. Digital detox
- b. Try a new sport
- c. Self-care retreat
- d. Learn a new language



5. *Orion* is an ocean ship from which cruise line?

- a. Viking
- b. Royal Caribbean
- c. Silversea
- d. Scenic

6. Riga is the capital of which country?

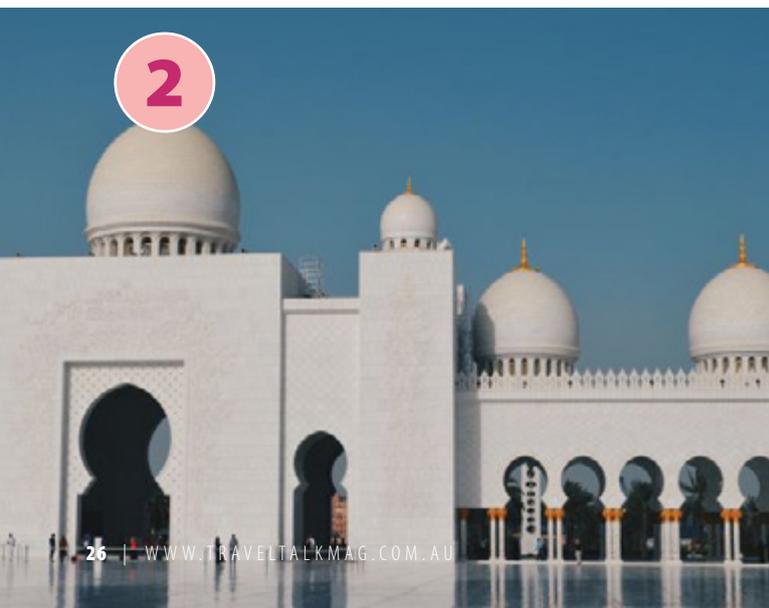
- a. Laos
- b. Latvia
- c. Liberia
- d. Lithuania

7. In 2011, what was the most visited tourist attraction in America?

- a. Times Square
- b. Las Vegas
- c. Disneyland Resort
- d. Grand Canyon

8. How far is the world's longest train ride from Moscow to Pyongyang?

- a. 9,214 kilometres
- b. 10,214kms
- c. 11,214kms
- d. 12,214kms





9

9. Which famous beach once banned the building of sandcastles?

- a. Bondi
- b. Waikiki
- c. Boracay
- d. Copacabana

10. Where would you find a mountain called Tetnuldi?

- a. Russia
- b. Bulgaria
- c. France
- d. Georgia



14

11. The grave of which famous explorer linked to Australia was discovered in London last year?

- a. Gregory Blaxland
- b. Abel Tasman
- c. Charles Sturt
- d. Matthew Flinders

12. Which Pacific Island has a travel trade show called Tok Tok?

- a. Solomon Islands
- b. Vanuatu
- c. New Caledonia
- d. Fiji

13. Which of these countries does NOT border Thailand?

- a. Malaysia
- b. Myanmar
- c. Cambodia
- d. Vietnam

14. Hobbiton is a tourist attraction in which New Zealand town?

- a. Matamata
- b. Whakatane
- c. Russell
- d. Mangawhai

15. Which two teams contested Super Bowl LIII?

- a. Washington Redskins & Dallas Cowboys
- b. San Francisco 49ers & Denver Broncos
- c. LA Rams & New England Patriots
- d. Green Bay Packers & Miami Dolphins



11

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

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



15

We're all in this
Travel*talk*
TOGETHER



Bondi Beach. Photo by Mudassir Ali on Unsplash