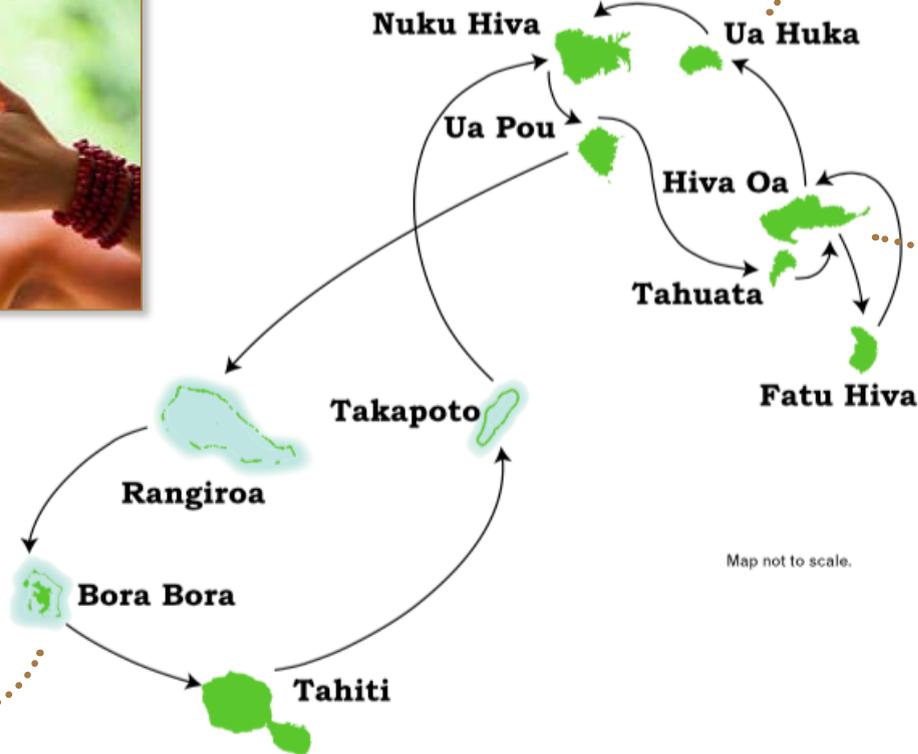


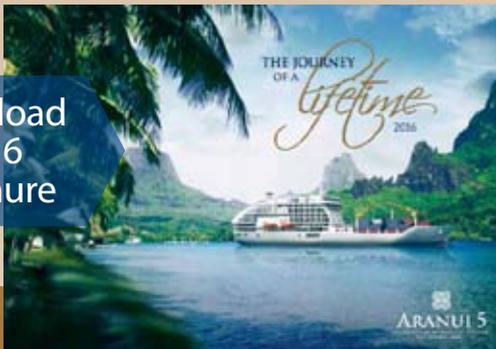
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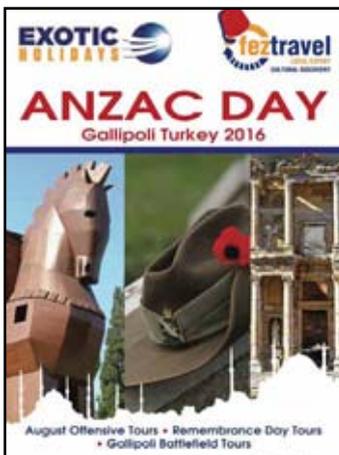
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The Travel Agents Association of New Zealand will soon embark on its most concerted effort yet to engage with Kiwi households and promote the services and benefits of using a TAANZ agent.

Chief executive Andrew Olsen says the message will be delivered in a contemporary way using the association's website as a hub, coupled with a social media campaign focusing on the value of using a TAANZ travel agent.

'We'll be taking topics with currency and feeding them out through social media.'

Olsen says the launch will be in the first quarter of 2016.

'This will build our profile and grow the interest in the use of a (TAANZ) travel agent. So if you haven't joined us you'll miss out – we're delivering value to our members.'

## Paris attacks highlight corporate duty of care

In the aftermath of the worst terrorist activity to strike the French capital in 70 years, hundreds of business travel managers worldwide activated duty of care disaster plans. This included locating travellers, assuring they were safe, and providing assistance for those who needed to be evacuated or moved.

According to Greeley Koch, executive director for the Association of Corporate Travel Executives, the same programmes will allow for a more careful analysis of the situation, eliminating mass cancellations of trips to France.

'Sadly, we've been through this before in Paris, as well as Mumbai and other places. Most business travel managers have an emergency contingency plan they can activate right away,' says Koch. 'A certain percentage of companies will automatically cancel trips to a city in crisis and evacuate their travellers quickly. Others will evaluate the impact of the crisis and act accordingly after ascertaining the safety of their travellers. Some companies are requiring senior level management approval to travel into a current crisis area, while others are leaving the issue to traveller discretion.'

Greeley Koch is opening ACTE's Global Travel Conference in Montreal this week. 'There is a natural heaviness as I approach this conference,' said Koch. 'The ties between Montreal and France

span centuries and ACTE just held one of its global travel conferences in Paris three weeks ago. We will exchange condolences and solidarity and we have to learn from this. We have to look to the future and make the future is safe for travellers and all.'



## Cornelius to AccorHotels

Tricia Cornelius

Tricia Cornelius has the new role of regional director of sales and marketing for Queensland and Northern Territory with AccorHotels.

She joins AccorHotels from Starwood Hotels and Resorts where she spent the last 12 years in key leadership roles, culminating in her becoming the director of global sales Australia.

## Competition and choice, results of retail 'realignment'

The current re-arrangement of retail brands is the largest change to travel distribution in 20 years, says Travel Agents Association of New Zealand (TAANZ) chief executive Andrew Olsen.

And while he says he has no 'commercial view' on what is happening with individual companies the overall

result is likely to be more competition and greater consumer choice, Olsen says.

'I do think we are seeing natural evolution here. We have a lot of travel agents in New Zealand and it seems to make sense for these agents to find brand relationships and alignments that help them reach their customers and assists them administratively and financially.'

Olsen says seeing the emergence of stronger and new brands bodes well for trade distribution and the suppliers that depend on it.

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## Sell TNQ



# TNQ sees strong numbers

by Ruth Scott

With cocktails in hand Sophie Nieuwenhuijsen, cievents; Debra Duffy, Lime & Soda and Erin Mitchell, Momento Travel Co head to the Sell TNQ welcome function

Sell TNQ, the B2B meeting workshop held annually in North Queensland, got underway over the weekend with buyers from around Australia, New Zealand and Asia meeting with North Queensland suppliers with the aim of growing group, corporate and incentive business.

Emma Perez from Business Events Cairns & Great Barrier Reef says there is strong interest from the New Zealand MICE market for North Queensland. 'We have received a record number of incentive enquiries from the New Zealand market since September this year, with most looking at mid to late 2016. This could be attributed to the

announcement of the new Philippine Airlines (PR) direct Auckland to Cairns service that commences in December, but either way, it is positive for the market as a whole.

'The new PR flights bring so many opportunities for the leisure and the conference and incentive market, and pair this to the strong NZD (against the AUD), and incentive programmes to Cairns, Palm Cove and Port Douglas are well within reach for many Kiwi companies.'

Perez is attending PAICE (Pacific Area Incentives & Conferences Expo) in Auckland tomorrow and wants to bring

tropical North Queensland to the front of the buyers minds. 'I am delighted with the number of pre-scheduled appointments and I am looking forward to getting in front of the buyers to update them, educate them and answer any questions about the region.'

### So many options

Delegates attending Sell TNQ had a one-day workshop at Tjapukai, a cultural and event venue, including a programme of traditional dance, music and art and boomerang and spear throwing lessons. Day two was getting to know the region with options of a Sunlover Cruise on the outer reef, a day sailing on Quicksilver's catamaran, on Wavedancer to the

Low Isles or a Discover Kuranda tour including a ride in one of Skyrail's new Diamond View glass floored gondolas and a visit to AJ Hackett for a rush of adrenaline on the minjin swing or bungee jump.



Down to business for Sophie Nieuwenhuijsen, cievents and Raine Davies, Pullman Cairns International



Erin Mitchell, Momento Travel Co meets with David Galloway-Penney and Jayne Martin from Novotel Cairns Oasis Resort



Barry McLeod, CMA Events; Sophie Nieuwenhuijsen, cievents; Debra Dufty, Lime & Soda; Erin Mitchell, Momento Travel Co and Glen Macdonald, Fitzroy Island



Kimberley Roberts-Salee and Emma Perez from Business Events Cairns & Great Barrier Reef



Barry McLeod, CMA Events; Sophie Nieuwenhuijsen, cievents; Debra Dufty, Lime & Soda; Erin Mitchell, Momento Travel Co and Glen Macdonald, Fitzroy Island

## Australia

## Colours change at Sheraton

Delegates attending Sell TNQ in Cairns over the weekend have heard that two of Sheraton Port Douglas' six wings have been refurbished, with the rest to be completed by April 2016.

'It's a A\$40 million refurbishment and the property is looking great. The exterior has been painted, new landscaping is scheduled and all the common areas, including the restaurant, will be renovated from December 2015. The colours are crisp and clean with plenty of white and natural textures,' says Tara Bennett from Business Events Port Douglas.

A multi-million dollar expansion of the Reef Marina is currently underway in Port Douglas town centre and part of the complex will house a new micro brewery, bar and restaurant, Hemmingway's. 'Once completed, Hemmingway's Brewery will feature an event space for 450 including an upstairs dining area for 120,' says Bennett.



Tara Bennett and Mikala McDowell from Business Events Port Douglas ready to meet at Sell TNQ over the weekend

'The menu will be gourmet pizzas, tapas and barbecue style food, to complement the new brews.'

## Pullman promotion for Brenon

Joss Brenon is the new conference and incentive sales manager for Pullman Port Douglas Sea Temple Resort & Spa, Palm Cove Sea Temple Resort & Spa and Cairns Harbour Lights. Promoted from his previous role of event coordinator for Pullman Port Douglas, Brenon worked for a DMC based in Sydney before settling in North Queensland. Originally from France, he says you can't beat living by the beach in this perfect location.



Joss Brenon

## New for SeaLink

SeaLink's new Great Ocean Road, Melbourne and Murray Highlights features visits to the Coonawarra, the Twelve Apostles and dinner on the Murray River.

The tour departs 29 February 2016 for seven nights, staying in the cities of Mount Gambier, Warrnambool, Apollo Bay, Melbourne, Echuca, and Mildura and is priced from \$1995 per person.

[www.sealink.com.au/escorted-holidays/great-ocean-road/](http://www.sealink.com.au/escorted-holidays/great-ocean-road/)

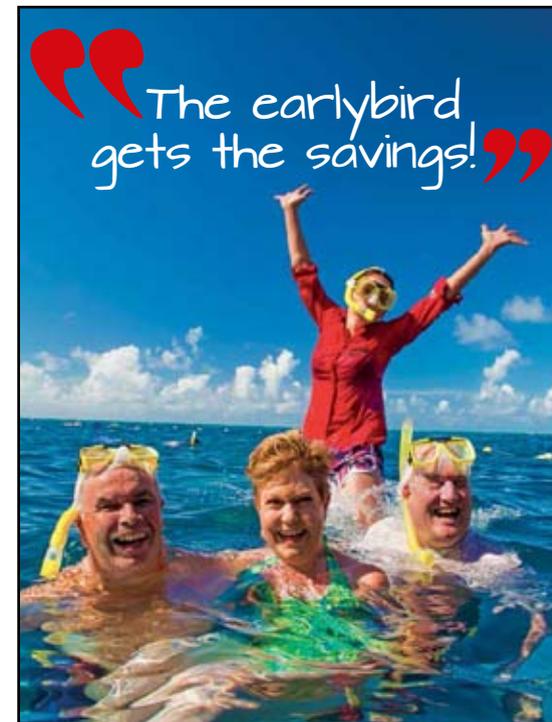
## AFTA'S TV debut

The Australian Federation of Travel Agents has announced that a new 15 second TV commercial promoting the benefits of booking through an agent will be broadcast during key Channel 9 programmes, as part of AFTA's 'ongoing commitment to consumer education'.

The commercial is running for three weeks on Channel 9 Sydney shows including TODAY, Mornings, the Ellen DeGeneres Show, Nine News Now and Nine's Afternoon News.

As well as the TV broadcasts the campaign will be supported with national exposure across Nine Entertainment's digital platforms, with the advertisement displayed to travel intenders, reaching 116,000 consumers.

A sneak peek at the new advertisement can be viewed now on the Travel Daily website at <http://www.traveldaily.com.au/videos/is-your-travel-agent-atas-accredited/242638>



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## Australia

### Kabarri skywalks opening in '16

Skywalks in Western Australia's Kabarri National Park are tipped to become a major tourism drawcard for the region, providing views of the renowned Murchison River Gorge.

The WA Government recently announced it had provided \$20 million under Royalties for Regions to develop a tourism precinct in the park including two 100 metre high skywalks at the Inyaka Wookai Watju site.

### Kingfisher Bay special

On sale until 29 February 2016, and valid for travel until 24 March 2016, Queensland's Kingfisher Bay Resort is offering a three night package from \$429pp. It includes buffet breakfast daily, full day 4WD ranger guided eco-tour of Fraser Island including morning tea, lunch and national park fee and return passenger ferry transfer ex Hervey Bay.

### WA - famils and wine

Expressions of interest will be sought for two popular famil programmes in Western Australia when the destination is represented at the PAICE 2015 business travel exhibition in Auckland tomorrow.

The Perth Convention Bureau is one of more than 100 exhibitors at the expo and it will be promoting its South West famil (May) and North West famil (November).

The bureau is also putting a bottle of premium WA wine up for grabs in a business card draw (the winner will be announced at 3pm). It is not too late to register for PAICE: <http://www.paicexpo.co.nz/visitor-registration>

The funding will also complete sealing of the Loop/Z Bend Road and redevelop the Z Bend and Meanarra Hill tourist sites.

The skywalks will project 20 metres and 12 metres beyond the gorge rim, more than 100m above the Murchison River. There will be interpretation signs, parking for coaches and large caravans, shade shelters and toilets.

Construction will begin next year and facilities are expected to open in 2017.

## KIAT best in South Australasia

Kangaroo Island Adventure Tours has won Best Tour/Activity in South Australasia at the annual TNT Golden Backpack Awards held recently in Sydney.

The awards are the only national awards for the backpacker sector and are decided on by the consumer, with backpackers voting for their favourite hostel, tour and activity in every state and territory in Australia and across the Tasman.

As well as the consumer vote, all those nominated were also judged by a secret shopper review.

## Africa

### New Botswana luxury in June 2016

Sanctuary Retreats has announced a major investment programme for its luxurious Botswana camp – Sanctuary Chief's Camp.

The exclusive camp, consistently rated as one of the top safari camps in Botswana, is located on Chief's Island in the Mombo Concession of the famous Moremi Game Reserve in Botswana, an area known as the 'predator capital of Africa'.

The existing bush pavilions will be re-built and each will include new features such as a private dining area, a tranquil outside seating area and a terrace plunge pool. Private dining will be available for guests on their covered deck from where elephants, giraffes, buffalo and other wildlife can be seen. A Nespresso machine has been added



to each pavilion. New bathrooms will offer a spacious outdoor shower, a large bathtub, floor to ceiling windows and folding glass doors with an outlook over the surrounding waters of the Okavango Delta.

The size of all 12 pavilions will increase from 51 sqm to 141 sqm, making them some of the largest in the area.



Adventure World is offering packages at three National Geographic Unique Lodges in three diverse South African locations. The 10 day private journeys depart daily and include two night stays at Sabi Sabi in the Bush, Tswalu in the Kalahari Desert, and finish with the Ocean at Grootbos Nature Reserve. Priced from \$10,409 per person,

the package includes six nights lodge accommodation with all meals, local drinks and scheduled activities, three nights hotel accommodation with breakfast, transfers and flights as specified.

<http://www.adventureworld.co.nz/south-africa/south-africa-s-unique-lodges/>

## Airlines

## New flight to Rabat

Etihad Airways is increasing its presence in Morocco with the launch of a new twice-weekly service between Abu Dhabi and Rabat to create a direct link between the two capitals.

Scheduled to start on 15 January 2016, and providing the only scheduled air link between the UAE and Rabat, the new service will be operated on Wednesdays and Fridays using an A340-500 aircraft configured to carry a

total of 240 passengers, with 12 in first class, 28 in business class, and 200 in economy class.

The new service is Etihad Airways' second destination in Morocco and complements its existing daily service to Casablanca. This brings to nearly 4,200 the total number of seats available to passengers travelling on Etihad Airways' services between the UAE and Morocco each week.

## VA Perth terminal

From 22 November 2015, all Virgin Australia services in and out of Perth will operate from T1 and T2.

Virgin Australia will no longer be operating from T3 from this date in line with the launch of its new Virgin Australia domestic terminal at Perth Airport.

Virgin Australia is also advising trade partners effective 22 November 2015, T1 (International) at Perth Airport will be renamed to T1 (International/Domestic).

As such, the following services operated by either Virgin Australia or Virgin

Australia Regional Airlines, will now depart out of and arrive into Perth Terminal 1 as per below:

- T1 (domestic): VA0200 – VA2499 (excluding VA1900 – VA1999)
- T1 (international): VA0050 – VA0199, VA1900 – VA1999
- T2 (domestic – most Virgin Australia regional services): VA2500 – VA2999, VA9020 – VA9499

GDS has been updated with the new terminal details and vendor remark messaging sent to all domestic Perth PNRs currently ticketed to request agents to update their clients of the terminal change.

## Africa

## Crystal for Dragonfly

African destination management company (DMC) Dragonfly has won the Society of Incentive Travel Executives (SITE) Crystal Award for Excellence in Incentive Travel – Africa Middle East for an East African programme put together for Directions Conference & Incentive Management Australia.

It is the first time a programme operated in East Africa has won a SITE Crystal Award and reinforces the company's belief that the East African countries – Tanzania, including Zanzibar, and Rwanda are being recognised as true stand-alone incentive destinations.

The SITE Crystal Awards are known as

the 'Oscars' of the incentive travel industry and it is Dragonfly's third consecutive SITE Crystal Award win. Dragonfly Africa Group, comprising Dragonfly Africa and Green Route Africa, has been associated with 10 Crystal Awards between the two companies – the most SITE Crystal awards of any travel business in Africa.

Dragonfly will be represented at the Pacific Area Incentives & Conferences Expo (PAICE), at SKYCITY Auckland Convention Centre tomorrow by Destination Marketing Services (DMS). <http://www.paicexpo.co.nz/visitor-registration>



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## Long term benefits for AKL - SGN

Simon Bridges, Minister of Transport at Friday's Air NZ announcement

Following Air New Zealand's announcement that it will be introducing direct flights to Ho Chi Minh City in Vietnam, Simon Bridges, Minister of Transport, says huge potential lies in a healthy relationship between the two countries.

'What's exciting is that in the longer term what will grow hugely is the number of Vietnamese who decide to come to New Zealand.

'Vietnam is a member of many multinational organisations that we think are most important, including its recent inclusion in TPPA agreements.

'Also, 90 million people is a very big market, with a number of sectors with very big potential. The obvious ones are agriculture, horticulture, and obviously tourism.'

Air New Zealand's chief strategy,

networks and alliance officer Stephen Jones says the airline will be embarking on a number of ventures to raise awareness of New Zealand around Southeast Asia.

'We'll be working closely with Tourism New Zealand to raise the awareness of New Zealand as a destination.

'We've already begun talks with Tourism New Zealand delegates across the Asia region, and they're committed to working with us and developing awareness in these markets.

On Friday morning Air New Zealand announced that it will be flying three times a week between Auckland and Ho Chi Minh City's Tan Soh Naht International Airport, from June to October next year.

The route will be operated by a 224 seat 767-300 aircraft initially, but Jones says they will be looking to upgrade to a 300 seat, 787 type aircraft.

## Finnair to grow feeders

Finnair is planning to increase the capacity in its European feeder traffic with a view to the growth of its long-haul capacity. As the first step, Finnair will temporarily lease two A321 narrow-body aircraft including part of the flight crew. The company is also assessing its alternatives for acquiring permanent additional narrow-body capacity.

Finnair's traffic consists largely of transit traffic between Europe and Asia

or America, with a transfer in Helsinki. Finnair's present narrow-body fleet used in its European traffic is already efficiently utilised, and the passenger loads are high. Therefore, growth in long-haul traffic also necessitates growth in feeder capacity between Helsinki and Europe.

The additional feeder traffic capacity required by the growing long-haul traffic will be acquired by replacing small narrow-body aircraft with larger ones.

## WAS GSA for OM

World Aviation Systems, New Zealand is now the GSA for MIAT Mongolian Airlines, effective immediately.

Contact details:

<http://www.miat.com/index.php?lang=en>

[MIAT@akl.worldaviation.co.nz](mailto:MIAT@akl.worldaviation.co.nz)

## QF 95th birthday sale

GO Holidays advises that Qantas is celebrating its 95th birthday with special shortlife fares to Sydney, Melbourne and the Gold Coast.

- Three nights in Sydney from \$495 from Auckland, Wellington or Christchurch per person share double
- Three nights in Melbourne from \$395 from Auckland or Wellington per person share twin
- Seven nights in Gold Coast from \$495 from Auckland per person share double
- Seven nights in Gold Coast from \$395 from Auckland per person family share

## CX October growth

Cathay Pacific Airways has released combined Cathay Pacific and Dragonair traffic figures for October 2015 that show growth in both the number of passengers carried and the amount of cargo and mail uplifted compared to the same month in 2014.

Cathay Pacific and Dragonair carried a total of 2,843,442 passengers last month – an increase of 6.9% compared to October 2014.

The passenger load factor grew by 3.4% points to 84.1% while capacity, measured in available seat kilometres (ASKs), grew by 6.0%. In the year to the end of October, passenger traffic rose by 8.1% while capacity increased by 6.0%.



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## Tourism debates how to ride the growth wave

The \$30 billion tourism industry will be focusing on issues that come with rampant growth at next week's sold out 2015 TIA National Tourism Summit.

Tourism Industry Association of New Zealand chief executive Chris Roberts says issues relating to tourism's social licence to operate, such as how many visitors are too many, have become high on the industry's radar.

How those issues are managed is a key theme running through the summit programme.

'The importance of these issues is demonstrated by the fact this year's summit is a sell-out,' says Roberts.

'More than 260 tourism and government leaders will be attending and we are expecting some lively debate to figure out how tourism can ride the growth wave and not get dumped.'

The summit programme features a high-powered line-up of New Zealand and international speakers who will discuss the critical challenges facing the industry and seek solutions to:

- Hosting hundreds of thousands more visitors without losing the goodwill of Kiwis and without damaging the natural environment
- Finding investment to fund new infrastructure and deciding when the time is right to make that investment
- Recruiting enough good staff
- Ensuring the industry consistently

delivers a world-class, genuine Kiwi experience

• Encouraging visitors to come here throughout the year and travel beyond the visitor hot-spots.

The summit is being held on Thursday, 19 November, Shed 6, Wellington.

[www.nationaltourismsummit.co.nz](http://www.nationaltourismsummit.co.nz)

## Backpackers via Aussie

International backpackers travelling through Australia are the target of Tourism New Zealand's latest backpacker campaign encouraging more of these valuable visitors to cross the ditch and visit New Zealand.

Backpackers are defined as 18-24 year old visitors, and they currently represent approximately 11% of total holiday visitors (159,000), 21% of total holiday stay days and account for over \$593 million in expenditure.

In the year ending December 2014, Australia attracted around 590,000 international backpacker arrivals of which 4 per cent of these visitors then went on to travel to New Zealand.

What this tells us is that there is a significant group of backpackers that are coming as far as Australia and are leaving without visiting New Zealand. With an average spend per visitor of over \$3,600, our new activity will focus on targeting these backpackers to make sure they don't leave without seeing New Zealand, says Andrew Fraser, director of marketing at Tourism New Zealand.

## Tourism NZ and AKL strengthen ties

Tourism New Zealand and Auckland Airport have signed a new MOU signaling their renewed commitment to combine efforts to maximise the value of the overseas visitor market for New Zealand.

This new arrangement builds on previous partnerships between the two organisations and the MOU is for an initial period of three years with annual plans agreed.

Auckland Airport will be leading the charge on route development and seat capacity growth while Tourism New Zealand brings its specialist market knowledge and destination marketing expertise to

the table.

Over the next three years, Tourism New Zealand and Auckland Airport will continue to jointly promote New Zealand to travellers through advertising, public relations activity, and working closely with trade partners.

A range of individual in-depth plans and targets have been established for the key markets of Australia, the Americas, China, India and Indonesia, some of which build on work already jointly undertaken by Auckland Airport and Tourism New Zealand.

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## AW India and Asia brochure

Adventure World's Asia & India brochure, the second in the 2016/17 collection, will be arriving in stores this week.

Featured in the new Asia & India brochure are all of Adventure World's most popular itineraries plus nine first time destinations including Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and South Korea. The brochure also features six new in-depth itinerary suggestions.

Like all of Adventure World's new

brochures, the Asia & India collection features 'mix & match' product modules, detailed route maps, scheduled departure dates and unique accommodation profiles.

Adventure World is also offering a free two night beach break for clients when booking the Classic Sri Lanka before 15 December 2015.

Valid for travel April - June 2016.  
[adventureworld.co.nz/brochures](http://adventureworld.co.nz/brochures),



## The rise of Japan

World Journeys has reported a steady increase in interest in Japan, which it says is now extending beyond the 'usual' highlights tours into lesser visited regions.

Backing up this report, Japan was recently named the number two country in Lonely Planet's Best in Travel 2016 list, was number one 'dream destination' on Twitter for Australians, and number

two for 2016 on the wish list of global travellers in Visa's Global Travel Intentions Survey 2015. World Journeys offers two small group hosted journeys to Japan – Cherry Blossom Japan departs 26 March 2016 and Japan's Autumn Colours departs 2 October 2016, taking in the northern island of Hokkaido with its mountains, forests and lakes before travelling on down as far as Tokyo.

Further itineraries will be shared with the trade in coming months, in the interim contact World Journeys 0800 117311 or [info@worldjourneys.co.nz](mailto:info@worldjourneys.co.nz)

two for 2016 on the wish list of global travellers in Visa's Global Travel Intentions Survey 2015. World Journeys offers two small group hosted journeys to Japan – Cherry

## Exotic welcomes AKL - SGN

Exotic Holidays is 'rapt' with the announcement of the Air NZ flights into Vietnam, providing a gateway for clients to explore the increasingly popular destination.

Exotic's Rahul Sharma has visited Vietnam many times and says the country is Exotic Holidays' best selling destination, having 'a lot to offer tourists'.

Exotic's range of Vietnam programmes is available on its website <http://www.exoticholidays.co.nz/destination/packages/Vietnam/30>



Vietnam is Exotic Holidays' best selling destination

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## Cruising

# New White Bay Cruise Terminal city ferry

A new White Bay Cruise Terminal city ferry provides transfers to and from Sydney's CBD for all cruise ship passengers and crew.

Ferries operate approximately every 20 minutes between White Bay and Circular Quay in the morning and between White Bay and Darling Harbour in the afternoon.

The ferry operates on all days that cruise ships arrive and depart from White Bay Cruise Terminal.

The service has been made possible by the construction of Sydney's first mobile passenger wharf by Captain Cook Cruises. The White Bay Captain Cook Wharf is located directly adjacent to the White Bay Cruise Terminal.

Priced from \$9 one way, per person.  
<http://www.captaincook.com.au>

## Promoting NCLH

Following the opening of its inaugural Sydney office, Norwegian Cruise Line Holdings (NCLH) has appointed specialist travel and lifestyle PR and communications agency Anne Wild & Associates (AWA) to implement an integrated public relations campaign for the company's three distinct brands in Australia and New Zealand: Norwegian Cruise Lines, Oceania Cruises and Regent Seven Seas Cruises.

The agency's remit will include trade and consumer media relations, a dedicated media familiarisation programme and a series of signature events and partnerships.



## Two for one on Galapagos cruises

World Journeys has a deal on remaining 2015 Galapagos Island cruises when booked by 10 December 2015.

Travel with a companion and pay for just one person (full fare) on a selection of departures this November and December.

Applicable dates are aboard Yacht La Pinta 27 or 30 November; 4, 11, 14 or 18 December; aboard MV Santa Cruz II 25 or

30 November; 5, 9 or 14 December; and aboard Yacht Isabela II 30 November, 4, 8, 14 or 18 December 2015, with durations ranging from three to seven nights.

Offer does not include international or Galapagos flights, entrance fee or Ingala card, and is subject to availability.

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## Tahiti goes smart for tourism

A Tahiti Smart Tourism initiative has been launched, with long-term goals including expanding free wifi access beyond the resorts, boosting visitor arrivals by digitalising the guest experience, and developing new opportunities for job growth and better economy.

Thierry Lehartel, cofounder of Tahiti Innovation Labs and Smart Tahiti Networks, says the islands need to develop a digital ecosystem to attract next generation consumers who rely on fast and free internet to navigate their travel journey and communicate with their social networks.

Through the Tourism Ministry's Smart Tourism initiative, if visitors can easily connect anywhere without any cost barriers, that will pave the way for a full array of new tech-oriented travel experiences, he says.

These include geo-location apps for self-

guided tours, friend-finder apps, on-island instant messaging, and 24/7 assistance networks in multiple languages.

The new tech initiative is in response to tourism in French Polynesia dropping significantly in the last decade from roughly 260,000 arrivals to 180,000. The islands are small and clustered relatively close together, and Tahiti Innovation Labs envisions the potential to create a 'smart nation' somewhat along the same model as Singapore to help turn around the visitor economy.

The Tahitian islands have had broadband access since the installation of fibre optic connectivity to Hawaii in 2010. To help boost the quality and reach of service, local telecom companies such as Smart Tahiti Networks and Open Garden are developing peer-to-peer 'mesh' networks that don't require cellular service, which instead take advantage of apps like FireChat.

## Revised Ramada special

Ramada Plaza Noumea's Harnn Spa was initially meant to open mid-December, however this has been delayed until February 2016.

The property has a Bar & Spa re-opening special available at the moment; any guests who are currently booked on this special will receive an additional

XPF2000 food and beverage credit, on top of the initial deal of XPF6000 food and beverage credit at the new Rendez Vous Sports Bar.

It is also offering a stay four, pay three or stay four and save 25% on sale until 15 December 2015, valid for travel between 15 December 2015 and 31 March 2016.

## More TV for Niue

Niue's Broadcasting Corporation is to be rebranded and upgraded to provide more channels and pay TV, Radio New Zealand International has reported. The Niue government says Niue will become the first Pacific nation to offer more than four television channels when it switches on 12 UHF channels in February 2016.

The general manager, Trevor Tiakia, says BCN will enhance its

services while there will be up to six New Zealand channels, a Niue tourism channel, and international news services from Australia Network and the BBC.

He says viewers will also be able to pay to view movies and sport. Each household is expected to have a UHF aerial installed along with a set top box. In addition Radio Sunshine will change its frequency to 88.6FM so it can be picked up on cars imported from Japan.

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## Popular NZ church needs help

Visitor numbers to the Church of the Good Shepherd at Lake Tekapo have reached 300,000 per annum and there are issues with security, safety, pollution (rubbish and defecation) of the church area and environs.

As a result the Tourism Export Council says the iconic church needs tourism industry help.

In a recent release, the council pointed out the church is so busy it cannot even grow grass in the grassed areas due to the numbers of visitors.

Add to this the ever increasing numbers of overnight freedom campers staying in the carpark, it's not hard to see that the church is under threat.

Spokesperson for the church, Phil Brownie estimates there are currently 250,000 daytime visitors per annum and 40-50,000 visitors in the evenings mainly for night time photography. Of the 300,000 visitors 30% are tour coach, 30% campervans and 40% rental cars. The church does have a policy of no photography inside the church which it has had to implement due to the level of crowding and congestion in the small church as every visitor endeavors to get the perfect photo.

Many of the church members would like visitors to regard the Church of the Good Shepherd as a 'Living Church, an



operating Parish and a place of worship' - not just a tourist attraction and that it should be treated as a place of reverence by all who visit.

Each week they receive numerous requests for weddings or wedding photos to be held at the church and this puts enormous strain on the resources of the parish as well as reducing the hours the church is open for visitors. While it is currently a source of income at three per week, during weddings the church has to employ additional guides because of the number of people trying to get into the church. Photo sessions are spoiled by visitors keen to get photos of the wedding party and at times abuse the privacy and rights of the wedding party. Potentially this source of income is under threat because of the number of visitors.

## Oxford scientists launch Think for Tigers campaign

With only 3,200 tigers left in the wild, scientists from the University of Oxford's Wildlife Conservation Research Unit (WildCRU) and World Animal Protection are launching 'Think for Tigers', an online competition to find an innovative idea, product or a solution that will help researchers and rangers locate track or monitor tigers in the wild to better protect them.

Researchers and rangers already use a variety of tools ranging from camera traps to satellite collars to study and monitor tigers in the wild. The Think for Tigers competition aims to improve and expand the existing 'toolbox' of methods to monitor tigers in order to better study and protect the last 3,200 tigers in the wild.

With the Think for Tigers competition, University of Oxford scientists and World Animal Protection hope to encourage creative thinking in animal protection and conservation science by attracting applications from not only wildlife



biologists, but also from people from all academic disciplines such as design, engineering and artificial intelligence.

The challenge is open at [www.thinkfortigers.org](http://www.thinkfortigers.org) for a period of six weeks (closes: 22 December 2015). It is open to anyone affiliated with a college, university; non-governmental or governmental organisation working in the field of nature conservation; intergovernmental organisation or with creative industries.

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[editor@travelmemo.co.nz](mailto:editor@travelmemo.co.nz)

Editor: Marcus Logan, Subeditor: Stu Freeman  
Ruth Scott and Aleisha Moore: Journalists  
Trish Freeman and Gary Covich: Graphics  
PO Box 60154 Titirangi  
Auckland 0642

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