

# TABS ON TRAVEL TODAY

Incorporating Tabs on Travel

Wednesday 14 October 2015

Issue 3181

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Jetstar

## Border Levy Move 'Disappointing'

Travel and tourism industry stakeholders from IATA to TAAANZ are disappointed by the government's decision to implement its proposed Border Clearance Levy for air and cruise passengers from 01 Jan.

The levy, to be collected by airlines and cruise operators when tickets are purchased and passed on to Customs, will be \$18.76 + GST for air travellers and \$22.80 + GST for cruise passengers for a return journey (arrival and departure).

"All travellers are a risk as they could inadvertently carry 'hitchhiker' pests or prohibited items with them. The levy will allow border activities to respond to future demand and create a more sustainable platform for border risk management service," say the Customs and Primary Industries ministers in a joint statement. "In the past, these costs have been met by taxpayers. The government considers it is fairer for the costs to fall on passengers travelling internationally." While members of the Coalition Against Travel Tax (CATT) agree measures needed to be taken to address the growing border clearance costs, the lobby group is disappointed by the lack of initial consultation and any ongoing feedback after the surprise announcement of the levy in the May.

CATT also acknowledges that the government did listen to some points

(like exemption for air and cruise crew), but is disappointed that a number of its recommendations were ignored like deferring implementation to 2017, and that the government declined to form a Traveller Reference Group (to oversee the collection and spend of the funds generated by the new levy).

### ... Comparatively Low?

While there is widespread opposition to the fee, Customs Minister Nicky Wagner says the level will bring New Zealand into line with many of our trading partners that recover costs from travellers, including Australia, the US, UK and China.

"The levy will also be low compared with other countries—Australia's AUD55 passenger charge and the United Kingdom's GBP71 long-haul passenger charge," she says.

The government says the levy rate is set for 30 months and will be then reviewed 'to assess its effectiveness and the need for any adjustments'.

### ... Fee Exemptions

Children under two years, air and cruise crew and transit passengers will be exempt from the new fee, they say. Also exempt are the military, government crisis workers, and travellers purchased and those who paid for their ticket in full before by 31 Dec for travel over the next 12 months.

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Biosecurity	\$8.38	\$12.20
Customs		
Arrival	\$7.45	\$7.50
Departure	\$2.93	\$3.10
Sub Total	<b>\$18.76</b>	<b>\$22.80</b>
GST @15%	\$2.81	\$3.42
<b>Total</b>	<b>NZ\$21.57</b>	<b>NZ\$26.22</b>

### The Breakdown

The chart above details the breakdown of the new border levy, including the cost component for arriving and departing passengers.

The higher cost for cruise passengers reflects the additional biosecurity assessments required at ports, say the government agencies.

### 6 Pages This Issue

News..... p1, p2, p4, p5  
Cruising Today..... p3  
NZ VA Famil - NSW..... p6

Sunshine Coast  
Queensland Naturally refreshing

### Summer Roadshow

**AKL** Tue 27 Oct, 5.30-7.30pm,  
Pullman Hotel,  
**HLZ** Wed 28 Oct, 5.30-7.30pm,  
Novotel Tainui  
**CHC** Thu 29 Oct, 5.30-7.30pm,  
The George

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## EY Tech Agreement

Etihad Airways has signed a USD700 million technology services agreement with IBM. The 10-year partnership will allow the airline to enhance technology services, by having access to the latest cloud-based technologies and services. The 'game-changing' agreement will see the creation of a new cloud centre in Abu Dhabi, with plans to develop more personalised travel solutions.

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## Industry Reacts To Border Levy

TAANZ chief executive Andrew Olsen is perplexed by today's border levy announcement, which he believes will impact on outbound and inbound travel, especially at the price sensitive end of the market.

### New EK Amenity Kits



Emirates has launched new Bvlgari amenity kits for first and business class customers—now being offered on its flights from New Zealand. There's eight designs each of the EK Private Collection for first class customers and the Indulgence collection for business class, with the 16 designer kit bags to be refreshed every nine months. Inside are Bvlgari toiletries, including fragrances. The new amenity kits are among the first of several product updates being planned, and a new collection of economy class amenity kits will be launched soon.

"All up [the decision to implement the levy from 01 Jan] is pretty disappointing. Added to that we are going to have to have giant leaps of faith that bodies like IATA will be ready to collect this new fee in time," says the TAANZ boss. TAANZ, a member of the CATT lobby group, is disappointed there was no real dialogue with the government on the issue, says Olsen, although he welcomes the crew exemption for the levy. "Look we hope this isn't going to have a material impact on inbound and outbound travel—but inevitably it will when people start making decisions around affordability."

### ... Regressive Step

The decision to implement a border levy of the scale announced 'places a heavy black cloud over the country known to be the land of the long white cloud' and is a sad day for the New Zealand tourism industry, says Jayson Westbury, chairman of the World Travel Agents Association Alliance (WTAAA) and chief executive of the Australian Travel Agents Association (AFTA).

"In a country who is so dependent on tourism and needs the economic powerhouse that tourism is both for the economy and jobs, it is out

of character for a government and Prime Minister who would normally be seen as world leaders on matters of Tourism to bring in such a tax," added Westbury.

He says a turnstile approach at the airports and cruise terminals is something the world did a decade ago. "This is a regressive step and unwelcomed by the global tourist and the global travel industry."

### ... Taxpayer Issue?

IATA too has voiced its concerns. "We are disappointed that the New Zealand government has decided to proceed with the implementation of the levy," says a spokesman for the global airline body. "Border control and customs aim to protect all citizens of New Zealand, not only air travellers. That is why the cost of border control measures, just like the cost for national policing, should be borne by taxpayers under national budgets. We are also disappointed at the lack of feedback from the government despite extensive input from the industry."

That said, the IATA spokesman stressed that the airline body would provide any necessary assistance to facilitate the collection of the levy by its airline members.

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## Scenic's First Ever SE Asia Brochure Out

Scenic has launched its first South East Asia River Cruising brochure which features its full collection of Mekong and Irrawaddy river cruises, including a number of new experiences, activities and extensions.

The 2016/2017 programme signals the inaugural sailing season for Scenic Spirit which will launch on the Mekong in Jan 2016, travelling over eight days between Ho Chi Minh City

and Siem Reap; whilst Scenic Aura, launching in Sep 2016 on the Irrawaddy, will travel over 11 days between the cities of Mandalay and Pyay.

"Our expansion into South East Asia has been a huge success since we launched our Mekong river cruises last Nov," says journey designer Asia Adam Burke. "Our guests' appetite for cruising this region with us has been voracious with sales surpassing expectations. Both rivers offer a wealth of fascinating opportunities and with Myanmar only recently opening up to tourists there really is no better time to visit Asia of old."

Highlights of the program include the launch of new Freechoice activities such as a Red Bridge cooking class in Hoi An; a cycle journey around Hanoi's West Lake; art tour of Saigon and more. In 2017 clients can also enjoy new Enrich events in Siem Reap including themed gala dinner and Apsara dance performance, and a tethered balloon ride over Angkor Wat at sunrise. Meanwhile, three new extensions allow clients to explore more of Vietnam.

For bookings made by 31 Jan 2016, clients can save up to \$1600 per couple for any journey to Indochina of 22 days or longer and of 14 days or longer to Myanmar. For further details see [scenicnz.com](http://scenicnz.com)



### Rooftop Terraces For Celebrity Infinity, Summit

Celebrity Cruises' Celebrity Infinity and Celebrity Summit are both set to feature a new Rooftop Terrace venue, as part of a USD16 million refresh plan. With modular furniture, a metal garden-like design and cabanas, the multi-functional venue will offer an open space during the day and by night it will showcase movies and other entertainment. There will also be food available for purchase.

Additionally, as part of the refresh plan, Celebrity is investing heavily in its Suite Class experience on both the ships, as every Penthouse and Royal Suite will receive new fixtures, marble surfaces, and comfortable seats in the bathrooms. The rest of the suite will get refreshing touches like new carpeting, drapes, and bed linens. Celebrity Infinity will go into dry dock this month, whilst Celebrity Summit will follow with a similar scheduled dry dock in Mar 2016.

### A Social Media First

In a social media first, P&O Cruises has revealed that its latest ships, Pacific Aria and Pacific Eden, will officially be named by Australian celebrities Jessica Mauboy and Kate Richie—via Twitter. The godmothers will tweet the official naming words during the dual christening ceremony on Fort Denison as the two ships sail either side of the Sydney Harbour landmark 25 Nov. The social media launch will also see the naming posted simultaneously on the godmothers' Facebook and Instagram accounts and shared by P&O Cruises across its platforms. Jessica will name Pacific Aria, whilst Kate will name Pacific Eden. The ships' naming ceremony will be part of P&O's Five Ship Spectacular.

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Wed 14 Oct 15 P4

## SYD MICE Expansion

Four Points by Sheraton Sydney, Darling Harbour has announced the appointment of Anne-Sophie Pouzin to the position of director of sales, MICE, effective immediately. This latest appointment signals the next phase in the hotel's recruitment drive as it continues to grow its sales force in the lead up to the launch of its new convention centre in Jun 2016.

Following its AUD200 million redevelopment, to be completed in Jun, its new convention facilities will include 4800sqm of conference, meeting and event space as well as two ballrooms, whilst an additional third tower will add 222 new guestrooms to its current portfolio, bringing the total number of rooms to 905.

The property is already taking bookings following the launch date.

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# The Fate Of MH17

**Malaysia Airlines flight MH17 was shot down by a Russian-made Buk missile, the Dutch Safety Board announced in their final report into the crash.**

All 298 people on board were killed 'as a result of the detonation of a warhead outside the airplane, tearing off the front portion of the aircraft,' causing it to explode in mid-air when it was flying over the eastern Ukraine conflict zone en-route to Kuala Lumpur ex Amsterdam on 17 Jul last year. It is thought some passengers may have been conscious in the up to 90 seconds it took to hit the ground.

The report also unveiled that 'there was significant reason to close off the airspace above eastern Ukraine, but Ukrainian authorities failed to do so'. It is still not clear where the missile was fired from.

## ... Aftermath

Since the MH17 disaster, the global aviation industry has reportedly been focused on providing timely information to carriers about potential dangers from global conflicts. Just recently the European Aviation Safety Agency has alerted airlines flying over the Middle East that Russian warships have been firing

long-range missiles into Syria that could cross under their flight paths. Meanwhile the Civil Aviation Authority of New Zealand has added the International Civil Aviation Organisation's report into the safety of civil aircraft operating in Baghdad, Damascus and Tehran FIRs to its website. The report says there is the need to fully assess the potential for risks to flight safety as there is currently armed conflict taking place in the Syrian Arab Republic. And as a result, there's 'possible existence of serious risks to the safety of international civil flights operating within portions of the Baghdad, Damascus and Tehran flight information regions.' See [caa.govt.nz](http://caa.govt.nz) for more.

## Exotic Roadshow

Exotic Holidays is travelling the country in Nov to present a series of agent updates, accompanied by TWX India and Fez Turkey, with special guest Tourism India joining them at the Auckland presentation. See industry diary for dates and RSVP with numbers for catering to [dale@exotic.net.nz](mailto:dale@exotic.net.nz)



## Spidey To Disneyland

Spider-Man will make his Disneyland Resort debut at the reimagined Super Hero HQ when it opens at the park's Tomorrowland Expo Center next month. Visitors will be able to meet Spider-Man, take a photo and grab an autograph when HQ opens from 16 Nov. Other character favourites include Thor and Iron Man.

## NZ Wholesale Niue

Air New Zealand has wholesale fares to Niue on sale to 19 Oct, with flights available from any NZ-served domestic airport at the discounted add-on level of \$50 each way for travel via Auckland. Wholesalers have details.

## SPG Double Double Offer

Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide is today celebrating the one-year anniversary of SPG Pro, and has launched a new promotion, SPG Pro Double Double. Members can earn double starpoints and double eligible nights toward elite status on meetings and events booked through Dec 31, for arrival by Dec 31 2016. There will be a \$2 million global media campaign highlighting the promotion in order to 'excite existing members as well as attract new members.' For full details see [spg.com/double](http://spg.com/double)

## New Oman Website

Oman Tourism has launched its new website and says it brings 'numerous benefits' to agents.

It now offers a new Travel Ideas section loaded with sample itineraries that direct consumer leads straight to travel agents that have completed Oman's online training modules. There's also an interactive Find An Agent zone making it easier for consumers to find consultants who sell Oman. See [tourismoman.com.au](http://tourismoman.com.au)

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**Nelson**

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**North Palmerston**

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[jetstar.com](http://jetstar.com)

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## Industry Diary

### OCTOBER

#### Bula Marau Fiji Roadshow – Luxury & Couples

**Auckland:** Wed 14, Pullman Hotel, 1730-2045.

**Hamilton:** Thu 15, Novotel Tainui, 1730-2030.

#### Innovative Travel Ancient Kingdoms Holidays 2016 Launch

**Wellington:** Mon 19, The Wellington Club, 1730.

**Auckland:** Tue 20, Parnell's on the Rose Garden, 1730.

**Christchurch:** Wed 21, Christchurch Bridge Club, 1730.

#### South Pacific Association of National Tourism Offices

**Tauranga:** Tue 20, Club Mount Maunganui, 1730. **Rotorua:** Wed 21, Novotel Rotorua Lakeside 1730.

#### Sunshine Coast Roadshow

**Auckland:** Tue 27, Pullman Hotel, 1730-1930.

**Hamilton:** Wed 28, Novotel Tainui, 1730-1930.

**Christchurch:** Thu 29, The George, 1730-1930.

### NOVEMBER

#### Exotic Holidays Roadshow

**Hamilton:** Mon 16, Evening.

**Auckland:** Tue 17, Evening, with special guest India Tourism

**New Plymouth:** Wed 18, Evening.

**Christchurch:** Thu 19, Evening.

**Dunedin:** Fri 20, Evening.

**Wellington:** Mon 23, Evening.

**Napier:** Tue 24, Lunch.

**Hastings:** Tue 24, Evening.

**Tauranga:** Wed 25, Evening.

Venues, times tba.

### FEBRUARY 2016

#### Brand USA - Discover America Events

**Christchurch:** Mon 22, Rydges Latimar Hotel, 1700-2130.

**Auckland:** Tue 23, The Cloud, Queens Wharf, 1700-2130.

#### JAWS Roadshow

**Dunedin:** Mon 29.

Venues, times tba.

### MARCH 2016

#### JAWS Roadshow

**Christchurch:** Tue 01.

**Nelson:** Wed 02. **Whangarei:** Tue

08. **Napier:** Mon 14. **Wellington:**

Tue 15. **Palmerston North:**

Wed 16. **New Plymouth:** Thu

17. **Tauranga:** Tue 22. **Hamilton:**

Wed 23.

Venues, times tba.

# Starwood Thanks Kiwi Trade

A Pacific Starwood Hotels & Resorts contingent is doing the rounds this week, catching up with many in the trade to show their thanks and to provide updates on numerous properties and developments.

In particular, there's a lot happening in the Australian market over the next few years, says Starwood's Marieke Mendez.

There will be new properties opening in Melbourne, Adelaide, Sydney, Perth and Brisbane; which will see the W Hotel brand re-entering the market and the Aloft brand making its debut.

Come 2018 Brisbane will be home

to a W Hotel, located next to the Queen St mall and with views of the river. Opening early Feb 2017, Aloft Sydney, located on Pitt St, will open its doors; whilst Aloft Perth Rivervale is also set to open in 2017; and Aloft Adelaide's opening date is scheduled for 01 Jan 2018, which will also be the city's first towered property. Melbourne's Docklands area will soon feature a new accommodation choice with a Four Points by Sheraton hotel due to open early 2017.

Meanwhile, Mendez says the opening of the Sheraton Samoa Aggie Grey's Hotel and Bungalows, which is currently undergoing a mammoth re-development, has been pushed back

to mid-Feb 2016. It was originally hoped the property would re-open this Dec. Mendez added that it will be a great addition to the recently refurbished Sheraton Samoa Aggie Grey's Resort.

### ... Prize Winners

It was S2N Events' lucky night as both winners of the major prizes on the night were from the company. Camilla Taylor took home return tickets to Cairns flying Air New Zealand and staying at Sheraton Mirage Port Douglas; and Jackie Coyne took home return tickets to Gold Coast flying Virgin Australia and staying at Sheraton Mirage Resort & Spa, Gold Coast.



Pictured at the PCO/MICE event at La Zeppa in Auckland last night: **1** Matthew Sturt, Sheraton Mirage Port Douglas; Carl Amos, Sheraton Samoa Aggie Grey's Resort; Corrine Dixon, Mondo World Travellers Hamilton and Kerri Hamilton, Sheraton Mirage Resort & Spa Gold Coast. **2** Wilna van Eyssen, Event Smart Conference & Events; and Jo Naumovski, Four Points by Sheraton Sydney, Darling Harbour. **3** Victoria Wales, HoT Events; and Chris McLean, Air New Zealand. **4** Heather Shaw and Meredith Drucker, The Events Group, pictured with Camilla Taylor, S2N Events. **5** Lisa Watson and Jess Ogg, both GO Conference & Incentive. **6** Andrew Parke, Fuzion Travel and Fay Butendijk, GO Conference & Incentive. **7** Winnie Fong, GO Conference & Incentive pictured with Hazel Ho, Travel Concierge. **8** Nicola Segal, Virgin Australia with Marieke Mendez, Starwood Hotels & Resorts.

## Mekong, Cambodia Tour

Active Asia has a revised Mekong & Cambodia Explorer small group tour, which it says is perfect for those who don't normally want to travel with a group but want a short tour to add to their FIT arrangements through Vietnam.

The tour starts in Saigon, with highlights including exploring the Mekong Delta region, an overnight stay in a riverside hotel, the chance to visit the floating market at Cai Rang, viewing temples and shrines in Nui Sam, before travelling to Phnom Penh in Cambodia to visit the Killing Fields and Genocide Museum, and then on to Siem Reap to explore the Angkor ruins.

From now to 30 Nov clients can secure an earlybird saving of \$250pp of all 2016 tour dates, Active Asia reminds agents. E-mail sales@activeasia.co.nz for further details.

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## Wine And Cheese In Hunter Valley



Day two of the Destination NSW famil trip saw agents head into the Hunter Valley, two hours inland from Sydney and well known for exquisite wineries and cheese making.

The combination makes it extremely popular with tourists and locals alike, with many in Sydney making the journey into the region for a weekend getaway.

Recommend clients take Australian Eco Adventures Luxury Tours to get the best knowledge of the area from expert guides. See [aealuxury.com.au](http://aealuxury.com.au)

### Redsalt Restaurant

After a long day tasting wines and cheeses why not head to the Crowne Plaza for dinner.

Surrounded by picturesque vineyards, golf course greens and framed by the rugged Brokenback ranges, Crowne Plaza Hunter Valley epitomises the best of hospitality and deluxe accommodation.

Views across a scenic 18-hole golf course, swimming pool and vineyard surround its signature restaurant. Clients can also enjoy beer and whiskey brewed on site, along-side innovative meals renowned for the use of fresh and local produce.

### ... Wineries

Hunter Valley is plentiful in vineyards, and clients can take a day trip or spend longer, ideally, to get more from their stay.

Bimbadgen Winery offers a special experience. With views over the valley clients can taste quality wines from 30-year-old vineyards, stroll through manicured gardens or enjoy lunch at the award-winning upstairs restaurant overlooking magnificent views and offering fresh Australian cuisine. Bimbadgen has a large amphitheatre, which hosts several music events throughout the year, including A Day on the Green. See [bimbadgen.com.au](http://bimbadgen.com.au)

### ... Dodge The Hangover

McGuigan Wines offers an educational talk before tasting. Clients can learn about the wine making process of both reds and whites—and receive interesting facts such as how to reduce the risk of a hangover. Guide Steve Shearer says look for additive 220, it's a sulphur and is put on the vines to kill insects and to increase shelf life. Egg and nut proteins can also contribute to a headache the next day, as well as bentonite which is a volcanic clay used in the filtering process of some wines. See [mcguiganwines.com.au](http://mcguiganwines.com.au)



**1** The group at Bimbadgen Winery. **2** Lendl Oosthuizen, Flight Centre Lambton Quay with some local lavender. **3** Gemma Pearce, House of Travel Barrington with Vanessa Noronha, HoT New Lynn at Audrey Wilkinson Vineyard. **4** Take notes: Steve Shearer of McGuigan Wines offers tips on beating the hangover. **5** Sampling the wares at McGuigan Wines. **6** McGuigan barrels.



### Tastings At Hunter Valley Cheese Factory

The Hunter Valley is a producer of delicate cheeses. Visit Hunter Valley Cheese Factory for an insightful tasting, where clients can learn about the production of hard and soft cheeses. Taste fottage, brie, blue and cheddar cheeses all made on site, with the exception of the blue cheese which must be made at a separate facility because of the bacteria used. See [huntervalleycheese.com.au](http://huntervalleycheese.com.au)

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