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# Travel Today

TUESDAY 23RD FEBRUARY 2010

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*Carrier admits agency concerns remain*

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*Changing market conditions prompt move*

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*Details on how you can win*

## Optimism returns for Qantas Hols

Michael Bruce

**Qantas Holidays has said its outlook is less 'cautious' and more 'optimistic' as the wholesaler reported a sustained improvement in the wake of growing consumer confidence.**

Speaking to *Travel Today*, Qantas Holidays general manager Chris Rankin said the

**From a wholesale perspective I'd say we are less cautious and more optimistic**

Chris Rankin

performance of the wholesale division had been somewhat "understated" in the wake of Jetset Travelworld's half yearly results release last week (*Travel Today*, February 16). While JTG chief executive Peter Collins said the overall outlook was "patchy", Rankin said both Qantas Holidays and Viva Holidays were showing positive signs.

"From a wholesale perspective

I'd say we are less cautious and more optimistic," Rankin said. "The signs are the business has got some stability."

Rankin warned the business would not become complacent, with yields slow to return. But, he said the key outbound markets of Thailand, Bali and Fiji were all showing solid improvements in passenger numbers, while long-haul markets had also come back. "We've seen a good return to passenger volumes," Rankin said.

Since October, the wholesaler had seen more "consistency" in booking patterns, he added, giving confidence that the worst of the poor market conditions were over.

After emerging from a period of cost-cutting last financial year, Rankin said he is unlikely to strip out more costs from the business. "We did most of the cost cutting last financial year. We will look to contain costs, but the business is in pretty good shape," he said.

**More from Qantas Holidays later this week.**

• [CLICK HERE TO COMMENT](#)

## QantasLink boosts Qld capacity

Michael Bruce

**QantasLink has announced an expanded flying schedule in regional Queensland.**

The changes, effective from April 6, include additional services between Bundaberg

and Brisbane and two additional return flights between Emerald and Brisbane.

An additional five Gladstone-Brisbane flights will also be introduced.

• [CLICK HERE TO COMMENT](#)

## Lufthansa pilots call off strike

Lufthansa pilots have called off their strike after one day and have reinitiated talks with management.

The airline's 4,000 pilots had planned to walk off the job until February 25, but will now return to work.

Nearly half the carrier's flights were cancelled at the height of the industrial action, throwing the plans of many Australian travellers into disarray.

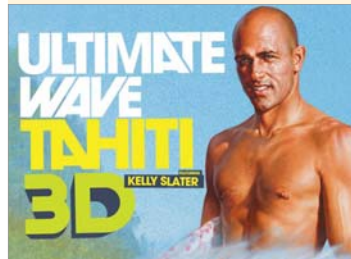
Meanwhile, British Airways cabin crew have also reiterated their plans to strike, though no date has been set.

• [CLICK HERE TO COMMENT](#)

## Tahiti Tourisme IMAX competition

Tahiti Tourisme and *Travel Today* competition are offering readers the chance to win one of 25 double passes to a screening of *Ultimate Wave Tahiti 3D*, starring surfing champion Kelly Slater.

The screening will take place at the IMAX Sydney on February 26 at 7pm. Tickets include popcorn and beverages. [See page four for more details.](#)



## Travel Today NewsFeatures

These stand-alone online guides are sent out with *Travel Today* and provide over 43,000 agents with all they need to know to sell the hottest destinations and products.



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# TravelToday

TUESDAY 23RD FEBRUARY 2010



## JAL calls for policy changes

Michael Bruce

**Japan Airlines is urging travel insurance providers to review their policies, claiming the refusal of many to offer insolvency protection for JAL is sending a negative message to the market.**

It comes as the Australian Federation of Travel Agents called on JAL to act as the merchant for credit card transactions to allay agent fears of another "Ansett-like" collapse.

JAL spokesman Matthew Cupitt told *Travel Today* discussions are continuing with major travel insurance providers, including Cover-More, in the hope that insolvency protection can be reinstated to policies. Cover-More included insolvency cover up until January 19, when JAL went into bankruptcy.

The situation has resulted in some agents having to ask passengers to sign a waiver when booking travel insurance, a circumstance JAL claims is destabilising to its business.

"We are talking to quite a few underwriters and trying

to look at ways at how we can reinstate the insolvency cover and show them there is no risk whatsoever," Cupitt said. "Our circumstances are vastly different to others in the past."

AFTA chief executive Jayson Westbury called on JAL to better communicate their situation

### Our circumstances are vastly different to others in the past

Matthew Cupitt

to the industry. Westbury said some agents are nervous as consumers who pay with a credit card on an agent's merchant facility can then invoke a chargeback against that agent, should JAL collapse.

"What JAL should do is come out strongly to the industry and say we will act as your merchant," Westbury said. "Everyone wants to support JAL but I think maybe they need to do more to give the industry confidence."

• [CLICK HERE TO COMMENT](#)

## JAL fuel surcharge increase

Olivia Collings

**Japan Airlines has applied to the Japanese ministry of transport to increase its fuel surcharge for international flights, including those to Australia.**

From April 1, the fuel

surcharge to Australia will increase from \$86 to \$138.

The increase is a result of rising jet fuel prices in the past three months.

The new fuel surcharges will be applied until June 30.

• [CLICK HERE TO COMMENT](#)

## AFTA set for new web system

AFTA is in the final stages of testing the new AFTA webMAIL version 2.0.

Expected to launch in the coming weeks, the enhanced version of AFTA webMAIL will allow suppliers to load their product information into the online database, in addition to having product details included in a daily email alert, which is distributed to around 9000 travel agents across Australia every day.

The service will remain free of charge, chief executive Jayson Westbury said.

## China charters

China Southern Airlines has completed a program of eight charter flights from China to Australia as part of Chinese New Year celebrations.

The services included the first ever direct charter from Shenzhen to Adelaide. More than 2000 passengers were carried on the charter services.

## BA holds firm

British Airways has no plans to alter its 5% base commission, its regional manager has said.

Nicole Backo, BA's South-West Pacific regional commercial manager, confirmed the current 5% base commission will not be changed. She said BA would stick to incentives for agents rather than increase commission.

## Moneydirect deal

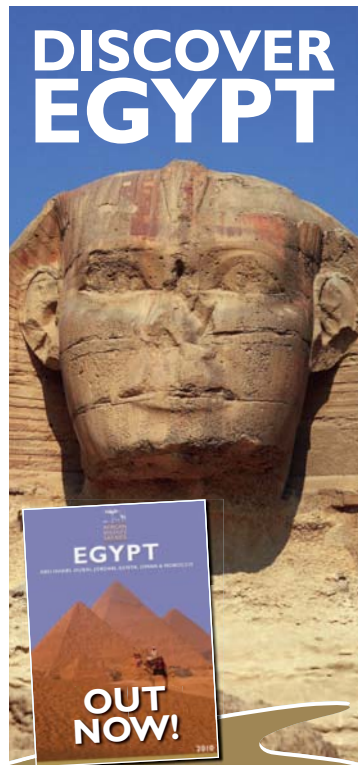
Moneydirect has signed a deal with Flight Centre's US-based wholesaler, GOGO Worldwide Vacations.

The deal will see Moneydirect process commission payments, automate settlement and report all commissions.

## Skywest set for "major expansion"

Skywest Airlines could be on the cusp of a "major expansion" in the next few years according to brokerage firm WH Ireland.

The carrier released its first half results yesterday, with net profit after tax reaching \$5.26 million. The result compares to a \$2.08m loss in the previous corresponding period. WH Ireland said Skywest had successfully targeted the resource market in WA, resulting in lucrative flight contracts.



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The changes will see Pacific Blue ramp up capacity

## V Australia to drop Fiji flight

Olivia Collings

Virgin Blue will axe one of V Australia's weekly flights to Fiji and replace it with a Pacific Blue service in the wake of what the carrier described as changing "market circumstances".

In a submission to the International Air Services Commission, V Australia said it will operate six flights per week to Fiji, with one Pacific Blue flight added from Sydney to Nadi. A third weekly flight between Melbourne and Nadi will also be added, though no timeframe was given.

V Australia launched daily services from Sydney to Nadi on December 18, but said circumstances on the route had changed.

"V Australia seeks the proposed variation following its experience in this market and in response to market circumstances, including the anticipated entry of a new competitor (Jetstar)," the carrier said.

The changes would enable Virgin Blue Group "more efficient

distribution of capacity across its international network".

Jetstar will begin a four-times weekly service to Fiji late next month, and said it was ready to pounce should any additional capacity become available.

"We have always desired to have capacity beyond four flights a week," Jetstar spokesman Simon Westaway said.

"If there are additional seats now available out of the Australian market, we would be interested in obtaining them."

Qantas Group wrote to the IASC last year warning that V Australia would pull out of the market once conditions improved. "It is entirely possible that when conditions improve on routes to which the B777-300ER is better suited, V Australia will redeploy this aircraft to other destinations," (*Travel Today*, November 6, 2009).

Calls to V Australia were not returned ahead of press.

● [CLICK HERE TO COMMENT](#)

## Volendam savings

Travel the World is offering savings of up to 44% on 2010/11 cruises to Australia, New Zealand and the South Pacific onboard *ms Volendam*.

Discounts are also being offered for third and fourth guests on all sailings, as well as bonus offers for package bookings made before March 31.

## Continental cuts

Continental Airlines plans to cut 600 telephone reservations jobs from April.

The company said the move was due to the increasing number of travellers who choose to book their flight online.

## Greek merger

Star Alliance has welcomed the proposed merger between Aegean Airlines and Olympic Air.

Aegean Airlines is set to officially enter Star Alliance later this year. "The integration teams from both sides will soon meet to assess the necessary steps, in order to guarantee a smooth transition of the merged Aegean Airlines and Olympic Air operations into the Star Alliance network," Star Alliance said in a statement.

## Jetstar ups flights

Jetstar will boost capacity between Singapore and Vietnam, increasing its eight times a week service to Ho Chi Minh to a double daily service by July.

Two new additional A320 aircraft will join the Singapore based fleet to fulfil the new schedule.

Jetstar is offering sale fares between Singapore and Ho Chi Minh for \$48.88 one way, all inclusive.

## Uniworld tempters

Uniworld Boutique River Cruises is taking pre-registration for the 2011 river cruising season.

Guests who book and deposit before April 30 will pay the 2010 rate for their cruise.

## Trafalgar and Qantas/BA deal

Travellers who book a Trafalgar Tour of 10 nights or more in Europe or the UK in conjunction with Qantas or British Airways will receive a free night's accommodation and savings up to \$400 per couple.

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## Anzac tours

Australia's interest in Turkey and Gallipoli continues to grow with Tempo Holidays reporting a spike in interest for Turkey tours ahead of Anzac Day.

A 12-night tour including a day at Gallipoli peninsula starts at \$1775 per person twin share.

## Cruise landmark

Classic International Cruises (CIC) has welcomed their 50,000th Australian passenger.

The cruise line operated the *Funchal* out of Perth from 2004 to 2007. Since then it has operated the *Athena* out of Perth and Adelaide.



### Invitation to Travel Agents 2010 Breakfast Seminar

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#### Terms and Conditions

Valid for any Qantas Sales ticketed via Air Tickets, Self Plate or via SmartTickets Online between 15 February and 04 April 2010 for departures on Qantas on or before 30 June 2010. The prize winners will come from the agencies which have the greatest growth each week during the promotion period of 15 February to 04 April 2010 and have issued a minimum of \$8,000 in net ticketed sales on Qantas via Air Tickets, Self Plate or SmartTickets Online. A minimum of 10% growth in Qantas sales versus the same period last year is required. One prize winner will be selected across the Stella Group each week and will win that week's 7 WONDERS prize. Winners will be notified at the conclusion of the promotion. The prizes must be utilised by an international travel consultant (and their partner of choice) employed full-time by the winning travel agencies. Prizes are non refundable, and cannot be exchanged for cash. All travel is subject to embargoes and availability. Travel Insurance, Visas and any FBT implications are the responsibility of the winning consultant. Stella Travel Services and Qantas Airways reserve the right to withdraw or change the conditions of the promotion at any time.

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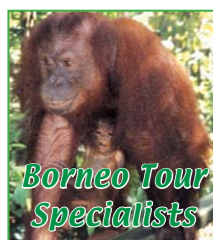


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