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## Newsletter June 2015

SPECIALIST AUSTRALIA & NEW ZEALAND

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### NEW ZEALAND

#### Value added to overnight marae stay

Sleeping on a marae is an age-old Maori custom, when two tribes came together to discuss important matters. They entered the marae's intricately carved ancestral house (wharenui) where they stayed and slept until a decision was reached through negotiation then finally sealed with a handshake and the pressing of noses.

#### PAL heading to New Zealand

Flag carrier Philippine Airlines will expand its route network to Australia with flights to its fifth destination Cairns.

The service takes flight from December 1 and the route includes an onward leg to Auckland, New Zealand. "In the long term, the service will drive traffic between Southeast Asia and New Zealand," said PAL chief operating officer Jaime Bautista of the new Manila-Cairns-Auckland route.

Cairns Airport chief executive Kevin Brown expects to see a big boost on tourism from Southeast Asia. PAL also operates from its Manila hub to Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane via Darwin.

#### NZ surges ahead in TripAdvisor awards

The New Zealand tourism industry is riding high with more winners announced than ever before in this year's prestigious TripAdvisor Certificate of Excellence awards. The awards recognise tourism businesses that consistently earn great TripAdvisor reviews from travellers. An impressive 3,142 New

Zealand tourism businesses were awarded a Certificate of Excellence by TripAdvisor in 2015.

#### Wyndham Group expands Ramada brand in New Zealand

Wyndham Hotel Group, a leading international hotel company, is looking to expand its portfolio in New Zealand with the signing of a franchise agreement for the four-star Ramada Suites Auckland Federal Street, located in the heart of Auckland's central business district (CBD).

The 42-apartment, boutique-style hotel is being developed by Robert Neil of New Zealand's The Safari Group. The NZD\$12 million (\$8.5 million) development is scheduled for completion in October and will offer a mix of studio, one- and two-bedroom apartments.

The Ramada brand's global portfolio consists of 840 properties in 60 countries.

Ramada Suites Auckland Federal Street will offer guests a central location close to the city's most popular attractions including Aotea Square, Sky Tower and Skycity and the Britomart precinct, as well as the city's major businesses.

#### The Spire Hotel Queenstown

The owners of Eichardt's Private Hotel in Queenstown, have acquired The Spire Hotel. The Spire Hotel is a beautifully appointed 5 star boutique hotel in downtown Queenstown, overlooking St Patricks Church and Church Lane, with a vibrant bar and restaurant; No5 Church Lane. Eichardt's Private Hotel is also expanding their property into a development next to their current location. There will be a penthouse apartment and two further lakefront suites.

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### **Air NZ's discreet luxury lounge....**

A discreetly hidden luxury lounge for Elite Priority members is tucked away at AirNZ's newly opened lounge at Sydney Airport. Not heard of it? That must be because membership is by invitation only, via CEO Christopher Luxon. "Elite Priority One is an invitation-only membership programme for our most frequent flyers, which has been running for more than a year," a spokeswoman tells NBR.

### **Air NZ to codeshare with Air India**

AirNZ and Air India have signed a codeshare agreement on services between New Zealand and India providing greater access and choice. It will see the carriers codeshare into several Indian cities over multiple gateways. Air India will also be able to access the New Zealand market on AirNZ services, including across the Tasman, connecting its Sydney and Melbourne services.

### **Wellington Museum Art Hotel to sell**

Major Australian listed entertainment, hospitality and leisure operator Amalgamated Holdings Limited (AHD) has announced it is acquiring the 163 room Museum Art Hotel in Wellington. Following completion of the hotel refurbishment it is expected that the property will be rebranded under Amalgamated's new designer brand QT. Amalgamated also operates Rydges Hotels and Event Cinemas in the New Zealand market.

### **Introducing the Strait Feronia**

Strait Shipping has purchased the 186m roll-on roll-off freight and passenger ferry that was sailing the Gothenburg (Sweden) to Kiel (Germany) route. The ship is larger than the Santa Regina, with the potential to carry 2150 lane metres worth of vehicles and 400 passengers. The passenger facilities include a movie lounge, cafe and bar, children's play area, quiet lounge and drivers cabins. Before departing Sweden the ship received a makeover which

included a complete refurbishment of the main passenger areas, a new paint job and Strait Shipping and Bluebridge livery. The Strait Feronia is expected to join the Straitsman in July, at which time the Santa Regina will be retired.

### **AUSTRALIA**

#### **Etihad launch new Brisbane to Abu Dhabi flight**

Etihad Airways, the national airline of the United Arab Emirates, has put the State of Queensland within easier reach of more international visitors and will give Queenslanders more convenient access to its extensive global network following the launch today of daily non-stop flights between Brisbane and Abu Dhabi.

The new non-stop flights are operated by Etihad Airways' brand new three-class Boeing 787-9 Dreamliner which features the airline's ground-breaking next generation First Suite, Business Studio and Economy Smart Seat. Etihad Airways codeshares on Virgin Australia flights from Brisbane to Bundaberg, Cairns, Cloncurry, Emerald, Gladstone, Hamilton Island, Hervey Bay, Mackay, Moranbah, Mount Isa, Proserpine, Rockhampton and Townsville. Guests who travel with Etihad Airways and Virgin Australia are offered the convenience of a single ticket purchase, through-checked baggage and convenient flight connections.

#### **Virtuoso expands in Australia**

Luxury travel network, Virtuoso, mid June announced the appointment of two new Business Development Managers (BDMs) in roles which will help the organisation meet the needs of its expanding membership in the Asia Pacific region. Virtuoso has a fantastic membership base in Australia and they are now working to build new

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memberships and partnerships in Singapore and Hong Kong.

### **HotelTonight arrives in Australia**

Last minute booking app HotelTonight has finally gone live in the Australia market, five years after the company was formed. The US based firm has signed up 100 hotels in Sydney and Melbourne so far and plans a major PR campaign around the country. It is one of the most popular hotel booking apps in the US travel sector with 13 million downloads and says more than 100,000 Australians have already used the service to book last minute rooms during their international travels.

The app offers discounted rates of up to 50% for last minute rooms and can be booked up to seven days in advance. The app now covers 500 cities worldwide and the Australia launch is seen as a stepping stone to expand in Asia Pacific.

This will put it in direct competition with the fast growing HotelQuickly last minute booking app, a similar service which is focused only on the Asia Pacific Region.

### **My Mates Tours – Adventure Tours**

My Mates Tours has launched their innovative, short modular tours to provide travellers with a unique Australian coastal and bush experience from Sydney. These small group tours offer value for money and their all-inclusive tours include access to all adventures on the itinerary including accommodation, meals, welcome pack and free WiFi on the coach.

### **Sydney Explorer new on Sydney Attractions Pass**

Sydney Explorer joins now over 35 Top Sydney Attractions including Taronga Zoo, Captain Cook Cruises, SEA LIFE Sydney Aquarium, the Sydney

Opera House, AAT Kings, Oz Jet boating, Madame Tussauds, and many more offered on the Sydney Attractions Pass. Sydney Explorer is Sydney's only Hop On – Hop Off tourist bus service. The open-top double-decker bus tours with 34 stops along Sydney and Bondi Beach and harbour bays. The popular 24-hour hop on hop off service will now be included with an iVenture Card covering both routes.

### **World-class beachfront resort to open in Byron Bay**

"Elements of Byron" is now taking shape, formed from the elements of Byron itself. Nestled between rainforest and eucalyptus, and right by the beach, the resort features private beach villas and a contoured main pavilion, like a windswept dune, with lagoon pool, fire pit, signature restaurant and spa. Barefoot luxury, nature all around, beautiful Byron Bay people. Approval is for 193 individual one and two bedroom villas of which 94 villas, along with the central resort and leisure facilities, are due for completion by Christmas 2015.

## **SOUTH PACIFIC**

### **Treasure Island Resort (Fiji) – New Premium Beachfront bures Treasure Island Resort**

proudly announces the opening of its new room category the 'Premium Beachfront Bure'. The traditionally styled bures have a modern contemporary twist to its décor and are 25% larger in floor size than the existing bures on the island. These 12 bures will be available from the 01st of July 2015.

Treasure Island Resort is one of Fiji's most popular island resorts. Treasure Island being our four-star resort offers 68 traditionally-styled and recently renovated bures, along with a sophisticated restaurant and bar, impressive three-tiered swimming pool and a highly acclaimed kids' club!

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**GAMEA RESORT & SPA FIJI WINS 4 AWARDS!  
GAMEA RECOGNIZED WITH ANOTHER FOUR  
AWARDS**

We are thrilled to be advised that Gamea Resort & Spa Fiji have recently won another FOUR awards, reinforcing themselves as one of the leading boutique resorts in Fiji and the South Pacific!

BEST LUXURY DESTINATION SPA IN THE SOUTH PACIFIC  
(2015), by World Luxury Spa Awards

TOP 5 RESORTS IN THE SOUTH PACIFIC, by Brides  
Magazine (New York), May 2015 Issue

TOP 10 PACIFIC HOTEL & RESORTS, by Best of Luxury  
May 2015 TRIPADVISOR 2015 AWARD OF  
EXCELLENCE