

TravelToday

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New Air NZ boss talks up growth



Chief in waiting: Christopher Luxon will take over from Rob Fyfe at Air NZ

Steve Jones

The newly appointed successor to Rob Fyfe as Air New Zealand chief executive has insisted the airline is on track to achieve its 2015 profit targets.

Christopher Luxon, general manager of Air NZ's international airline, was this morning named as the man to lead the carrier when Fyfe steps down at the end of the year. He will spend the next six months working closely with Fyfe to gain a deeper understanding of the airline, its chairman John Palmer said.

Luxon, who only joined Air NZ 13 months ago from Unilever Canada, where he was chief executive, said he would "protect and enhance" the Air NZ philosophy of putting customers at the heart of its business.

He said the carrier was well placed to grow, with a 12-month

"deep review" of the international operation establishing a strategy that aims to improve profitability by NZ\$110 million by 2015.

"I think we on track to delivering that plan," he said.

The North American market has been "fundamentally strengthening" while Asia also provides huge opportunities.

Fyfe added that US carriers are "all positive, and we are a key player in that market".

Palmer said the appointment met Air NZ's preference of finding a replacement from within its ranks.

"But it was important to appoint the best candidate. Those two things have coincided," he said.

"He is a world class executive on every level and will challenge Air New Zealanders to lift the airline's commercial and customer focus to an even higher level."

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ATE moves to Sydney in 2013

The Australian Tourism Exchange (ATE) will return to Sydney in 2013, the second time in three years the city will have hosted the event.

It will take place between April 26 and May 2.

"We are delighted to host the event in Sydney again next year and the Destination NSW team has already started preparations to ensure international buyers and the world's leading travel trade media can discover new and exciting experiences in Sydney," Destination NSW chief executive Sandra Chipchase said.

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Silversea acquires expedition ship



The Galapagos Explorer II will be refurbished and renamed in September 2013

Steve Jones

Silversea Cruises has added a second expedition ship to its fleet after acquiring Ecuadorian tour company Canodros which owns and operates a vessel in the Galapagos Islands.

The 100-passenger Galapagos Explorer II will undergo a major

The acquisition will enable Silversea to operate cruises in the Galapagos Islands for the first time

refurbishment in September next year and will be renamed, a move the luxury cruise firm said will "ensure consistency with the standards of the Silversea fleet".

It will result in the cruise line offering cruises in the Galapagos for the first time with Silversea planning to offer year-round voyages.

Until then, the ship will continue its planned schedule of cruises and will be operated by Canodros. The Guayaquil-based company will also continue to handle sales, marketing and reservations.

All 50 suites on the ship have ocean views while 24 include private balconies, Silversea said.

Senior executive Steve Odell has made no secret of the firm's desire to look for a second expedition ship following the success of the Silver Explorer.

Meanwhile, the firm is offering free upgrades for selected sailings in the Mediterranean on the Silver Spirit between July and October.

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Cudo buys Getaway Lounge

Group buying site Cudo has expanded further into the travel deals market with the acquisition of Getaway Lounge.

Cudo, owned by Nine Entertainment Co, said it will expose its "huge" database of subscribers to the "travel experiences featured on the Getaway travel show".

"The daily deals market is experiencing sustained growth in Australia and travel continues to be one of the largest categories," Cudo chief executive Mike Sneesby said. "Bringing Cudo together with Getaway Lounge means our offer to merchants and consumers becomes

bigger and better. By rolling the Getaway Lounge business into Cudo, it enables us to combine operations, recognise synergies in both businesses through cross-promotion and gain significant market share."

Cudo wants to build a "leadership position" in the travel group buying market, Sneesby added.

Getaway Lounge chief executive Timothy Hughes said the site offers 300 travel deals with discounts of up to 80%.

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Scenic "new-build" enters service

Scenic Tours is claiming to operate the first 'new build' ship in Russia for 25 years following official registration of the Scenic Tsar.

The operator has exclusively chartered the 112-passenger ship for the next five years with the first voyage already underway having departed St Petersburg on Sunday.

Although not strictly a new-build ship, the Russian Maritime Authority gives vessels that classification if at least 80% of a ship has been reconstructed, as in the case of the Tsar.

"It will take the experience of river cruising in Russia to a whole new level," Scenic Tours managing director Glen Moroney said.

The reconstruction was funded by Scenic.



Insight issues price rise warning

Insight Vacations has warned that prices may rise if currency continues to fluctuate.

The coach operator has put a selection of 2013/14 Europe and Britain itineraries on sale at 2012 prices with managing director Lorraine Sharp telling agents that early booking will safeguard against potential price hikes.

"While the Australian dollar is still performing well, it has seen a slight decrease in recent weeks," Sharp said. "By securing the prices of your clients' 2013/14 tour now, you'll be shielding them from any price increases that may result from any potential currency fluctuations over the next year."

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AUSTRALIAN TOURISM EXCHANGE SPECIAL REPORT

Quality will set us apart: TA

Anne Majumdar in Perth

Tourism Australia has highlighted "quality of experience" as its major tactic to fight off stiffening competition from other markets.

Speaking at the Australian Tourism Exchange, managing director Andrew McEvoy said Australia was not a "mass volume" destination, ranking 48th in the world for international arrivals by the United Nations World Tourism Organisation.

But he highlighted a much higher ranking in terms of spend with Australia seventh in the world in terms of total tourism receipts and the number one in spend per visitor.

"We're not mass volume, but we are a high yielding destination that must have an accent on quality of experiences," he said.

McEvoy described Australia as "one of the pioneers of tourism marketing," but admitted the landscape was now "more complex".

Growing competition from other markets was a key factor.

While Australia had been the first country to get Approved Destination Status in China in 1999, around 130 destinations now have similar recognition.

"There are also 180 national tourism organisations trying to get the same consumers as us in the UK," he said. "We have to be better and better to be able to compete."

While China and India will be key focuses for the tourism body over the coming years, McEvoy stressed a "balanced portfolio approach" and was optimistic that Europe would bounce back, although he admitted the UK was "difficult".

He highlighted access as an ongoing issue, with a 54% increase in international air capacity required in order to achieve its Tourism 2020 plan.

But he reported 15% growth in international seats over the last year. "That's ahead of what we need," he said.

Indian visitors on rise in Queensland

Indian visitor numbers to Queensland are starting to recover from substantial losses seen in the aftermath of violent incidents involving Indian students in Victoria three years ago.

In the year to March 2012, Indian visitors to the state rose 33% to 32,000, significantly outstripping Chinese growth of 16%.

International director Korea, India & Middle East Paul Buggy said numbers had plummeted in the wake of the 2009 attacks.

"It hit us at a time when we were starting to see substantial increases," he told *Travel Today*.

But the negative perception of Australia in India now appeared to have subsided, Buggy said.

Tourism Australia country manager India Nishant Kashikar said the 300,000 Indians living in Australia would play a vital part of the tourism body's India 2020 strategy, unveiled last week.

"They are really the advocates of Australia," Kashikar said, adding they were highly active on social media platforms which helped "spread the word".

Flight target for WA regions

Tourism WA is exploring the potential redevelopment of Busselton Airport, the gateway to the Margaret River region, and bringing international flights into Broome.

Speaking at the Australian Tourism Exchange in Perth, chief executive Stephanie Buckland admitted considerable investment would be required to enable Busselton to receive narrow body and wide body aircraft.

The tourism body is currently undertaking studies before approaching the government with its proposal. If approved, east coast services would be introduced first, with international markets to follow.

Buckland revealed the tourism body is also looking at "opening up" Broome as a "northern gateway into WA", eyeing direct air services from Singapore.

"It would help the whole Kimberley region," she said. While the airport is set up to receive jet aircraft, the issue is to convince carriers the route would be financially viable, she said.

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Is this the All Blacks in disguise?

It may not be quite as intimidating as the All Blacks, but a group of top-selling Victorian Student Flight agents performed their own version of the Haka on a six day journey through New Zealand with Topdeck.

The group started the trip in Auckland with highlights including an overnight stay on New Zealand's biggest house boat in the Bay of Islands, the small seaside town of Paihia, the famous Waikato Region or 'Middle Earth', a night in a traditional Maori marae and the thermal springs of Rotorua.

Pictured from rear left to right: Joanne Fry, Hawthorn; Jo Kopitschinski, Richmond; Sarah Abdullah, Highpoint; Diana Adaman, Topdeck; Melanie Barnes, Collingwood.

Front row: Kylie Steinert, Swanston St; Tim Holden, Topdeck; Prue Eltringham, SF Geelong; Jason Hindes, Box Hill; Bronwyn Bowen, Prahran and Shaun Busuttill, Melbourne Central.



Shipwrecked in style on Wilson Island

Infinity Holiday staff were shipwrecked in style as they visited Wilson Island on a faml hosted by Delaware North Parks and Resorts Australia.

Pictured from left: Shelley Ball, Zsana Raerino, Gerri Prosser (Wilson Island host), Fiona McMahon, Catherine Thomson, Kirsty Short, Sam Navrathna (Wilson Island host) and Tara Winton.

SHARE WATCH AS OF 3.25PM AEST

Company	Share price	% Change	
Air New Zealand	0.670	-0.74	▼
Qantas	1.140	-3.39	▼
Virgin Australia	0.387	-0.77	▼
Regional Express	1.070	-0.47	▼
Skywest	0.350	0	
Flight Centre	19.460	+0.78	▲
Jetset Travelworld	0.350	0	
Webjet	3.550	-0.84	▼
Wotif	4.070	-1.21	▼
Corporate Travel Management	1.955	-1.26	▼

HAVE SOME FAMIL PICS YOU WANT TO SHARE WITH US?

General Manager Topdeck Australia/New Zealand



Topdeck Travel is a rapidly growing youth tour operator with programs currently in Europe, Scandinavia, Egypt, Morocco, Australia, New Zealand, Africa and Fiji. We are seeking a dynamic individual with strong marketing credentials to take on the role of General Manager. As General Manager you will be accountable for all functioning areas of the business. This fulltime position is based in Brisbane.

Key responsibilities:

- Oversee the marketing of the company's global portfolio
- Maintain excellent relationships and be the "face of the company" at networking functions
- Oversee all aspects of the business including Operations, Finance and Administration, Marketing, Reservations Team and Sales.
- Working with Heads of departments to ensure all parts of the business run smoothly
- Oversee the recruitment of staff and ensure staffing levels and staff remuneration is adequate.

Applicants for this outstanding career opportunity should have a demonstrable experience in business management and leadership, a hands on approach and capable of managing across relevant disciplines. Preferably with executive experience with other youth brands or a travel background. Experience with people management, touring operations and highly developed interpersonal skills, together with relevant tertiary and professional business qualifications will be key to success in this role.

Please send a cover letter and resume to: employment@aptouring.com.au