

TABS ON TRAVEL TODAY

Incorporating Tabs on Travel

Wednesday 15 July 2015

Issue 3116

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Huge Growth In Online Travel Market

A new report suggests Kiwis are becoming more confident in buying on-line, especially on travel—but retail chains say they're spending more in-store too.

Almost two million New Zealanders bought something online last year, spending 21% more than in 2013 on \$4.6 billion worth of goods, according to Nielsen's *Big Business of E-Commerce*.

Travel is the lead category for online shopping and airline tickets tops the list, with 46.2% of all online shoppers (902,000) buying flights last year, up 10% on 2013.

Travel-related services, such as hotels and cars, is now the third largest category (behind clothing), up a huge 42% on 2013. Some 663,000, or 34%, of online shoppers bought from this category last year.

Air New Zealand meanwhile is the fifth most popular online retailer, with 577,000 monthly visitors.

Nielsen research director Tony Boyte says the growth in travel-related buying is notable, particularly when other categories such as clothing and books saw declines.

"It's actually pretty strong growth on the back of a big base," he says. "Over 900,000 shopped online for airline tickets in the last 12 months—it's always been the number one category but to hit 900,000 is pretty big."

Boyte says the proliferation of websites like Booking.com and Wotif, as

well as daily deals websites, is contributing to the growth. "Booking.com is now at 259,000 [monthly visitors], and we've seen very strong growth for Expedia (53%) and Wotif (23%) as well."

Websites such as House of Travel and Flight Centre are still in the top 10 for travel, and are 'pretty strong' but feeling the pressure from others in the market, in particular Expedia, says Boyte.

Positive market conditions have also been a driving factor for growth, with people more likely to subscribe to sites like GrabOne when the economy is buoyant. "We've had a good year or two," Boyte says, adding that he isn't so confident the next 12 months will see such strong growth as the economy becomes more volatile. "The NZD has been dipping and that's been driving a lot of overseas travel too."

... Retail Up Too

Retail chains have pointed out that while online travel spend may have grown last year, in-store spend certainly did too.

House of Travel's Brent Thomas says statistics show how well the market performed last year, and it's 'not just an online play'.

He does agree it appears growth may slow later this year. "Sentiment within New Zealand has softened, there will be growth but it may not be at the same rate as last year," he says.

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OzFocus Registration

Agents are invited to hear from Australian suppliers—and be in to win prizes including a trip to the lucky country—at the OzFocus event in Auckland on 23 Jul.

The event will run in a speed-dating style format, and food and drink will be provided. Suppliers include AAT Kings, Excite Holidays, DriveAway Holidays, SeaLink, Virgin Australia, Air New Zealand, Rail Plus, as well as regional and state tourism bodies.

See industry diary for details and to RSVP send agency name and names of people attending to ozfocusnz@gmail.com



Be Safe With Selfies

Too many people are being injured or killed in pursuit of the perfect selfie, says the Russia Interior Ministry—so it's launched a Safe Selfie campaign, with signs showing people it's probably not smart to take a picture with a tiger, in front of a train or while holding a gun. At least 10 Russians have been killed, and 100 injured, while taking selfies this year. "We want to remind citizens that the pursuit of 'likes' on social media can put them on the road to death," a spokesperson for the police reportedly said.

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New England Mission

Discover New England, which covers the states of Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island and Vermont, is heading to New Zealand for its first ever trade mission in Oct. The RTO has appointed Canuckiwi to plan and execute the mission, which will include trade appointments and training.

Mercure Newcastle

Mercure Newcastle Airport, due to open 01 Aug, has released pre-opening rates of AUD150pn including overnight accommodation and up to two nights car-parking. The rates are valid for stays 01-31 Aug. The hotel offers contemporary sound-proofed rooms, high-speed wireless broadband, blackout blinds and smart TVs.

QF Canada Changes

Qantas has introduced a new fare structure for travel from New Zealand to Canada, consistent with the recent changes to USA fares, effective for sales from 13 Jul and travel from 01 Sep. See qantas.co.nz/agents

AA Expansion

American Airlines will add eight new routes throughout Mexico, the Caribbean and Latin America later this year, with new flights to Mexico City International Airport; General Rafael Buelna International Airport in Mazatlan, Mexico; Curacao International Airport; Sangster International Airport in Montego Bay, Jamaica; Punta Cana International Airport; Gregorio Luperon International Airport in Puerto Plata, Dominican Republic; and Mariscal Sucre International Airport in Quito, Ecuador, pending regulatory approvals.

Bali Update: NZ Delayed, QF Helps

The Bali ash cloud is impacting flights again today, with Air New Zealand's flight NZ245 to Denpasar, scheduled to depart at 1630 today, now delayed because of forecast conditions at its arrival time.

NZ is reviewing options for a rescheduled departure time tomorrow, and says the late arrival of the aircraft means return service NZ246 will also be delayed. A revised time will be advised no later than 1700 today, check affected bookings for updated details. NZ has flexibility on fare types for passengers ticketed to travel to/from DPS that are affected up to and including today, see airnzagent.co.nz. Jetstar said this morning it was planning to operate scheduled and additional services today, subject to flying conditions remaining safe. Qantas flew empty B737-800 aircraft to Bali yesterday, bringing stranded Aussies home to Perth overnight.

CHC Industry Rates

BreakFree on Cashel in Christchurch is offering industry rates starting at \$79pn in a city urban king room, for stays 31 Oct. The CBD hotel offers smart televisions, Wi-Fi and mood lighting in each room, on-site workout room and dining at Bar & Café 165. See t-mail sent today or e-mail cashel.res@breakfreeresorts.co.nz

QF South America

Qantas has introduced a 60-day advance purchase economy fare and 21-day advance purchase business fare for travel from New Zealand to South America, effective for sales until further notice. New long-term lead-in levels to Santiago are from \$2165 in economy, and \$7095 in business. See qantas.co.nz/agents

Virgin Australia this morning was also planning to operate all scheduled and additional flights.

Airlines have pointed out that the ash cloud's movement is highly unpredictable, and the latest forecast is predicting unfavourable conditions may return later in the week.

London On Sale

World Aviation advises of Virgin Atlantic's 'dreamy fares' from New Zealand to London. AKL to LHR economy is priced from \$1925; premium economy is from \$4080; and business is from \$7083. Book via HKG/SHA/LAX/SFO. On sale to 04 Aug for travel 01 Sep-30 Nov or 16 Jan-24 Mar.

KE Group Requests

Korean Air advises of its group price request procedure. Agents need to complete the 'Group Quote Request Form'. When all the details have been completed e-mail groups@koreanair.co.nz. KE will provide an indicative price, which will be subject to the class being available at time of booking.



NZ Houston Winner

Kylie Pauling, House of Travel Richmond, has won tickets for two to Houston with Air New Zealand as well as a Carnival Caribbean Cruise for two departing Galveston, Texas. All agents who attended the Southern Hospitality events hosted by NZ in conjunction with Francis Travel Marketing and Brand USA were in the draw to win the prize. Agents can download a Houston cheat sheet at airnzagent.co.nz/flying-to-houston

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Cuba Opens Up WiFi

Cuba has opened 35 Wi-Fi access points nationwide and slashed prices from USD4.50 to USD2 an hour. Until now internet access has been restricted to state internet parlours and upmarket hotels, with only 3.4% of Cubans with intranet or internet access. In Havana, local artist Kcho is offering the public free (and officially-sanctioned) use of his government-approved connection at his cultural centre, although at 2Mbps the connection is not fast.

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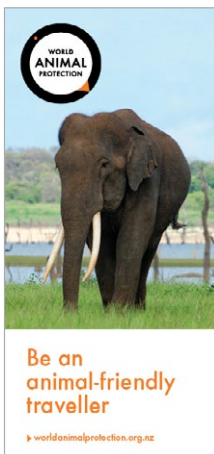
World Animal Protection has launched a guide to help travellers avoid exploiting animals while overseas, and it's asking agents to distribute the free guides to their clients.

The organisation receives calls 'every week' from New Zealanders who want to know how they can help stop animal cruelty while overseas, says WAP country director Bridget Vercoe.

It's now produced the *Animal-Friendly Traveller Guide*, which offers simple tips on how not to unwittingly encourage animal cruelty, as well as what to do if clients come across it on their travels.

"Please help us improve the lives of animals everywhere by educating your clients to make animal friendly choices when they travel," says Vercoe. "Tourist activities that involve the mistreatment of animals exist for one reason, and one reason only—tourists choose to support them."

Vercoe points to the dancing bears which were once paraded in tourist areas in Greece and Turkey, until visitors began objecting to the practise. Now the bears live in sanctuaries, and their handlers have been trained



in new employment, she says.

"The example of the dancing bears shows tourists can play a part in breaking the cycle of cruelty," she says.

The exploitation of animals for tourists' entertainment has come under the spotlight in recent years, with travel companies including STA and Intrepid discontinuing experiences like elephant rides and tiger temples.

For free copies of the guide, e-mail info@worldanimalprotection.org.nz

WINZ Needs To Know

Work and Income is reminding travellers who are on a benefit that they need to let WINZ know of their travel plans and reasons for travel before departing New Zealand. WINZ will automatically stop payments from the day after travellers leave New Zealand (except those on superannuation and veteran's pension), unless they have informed WINZ before they go and it has agreed the payments can continue. Clients can inform WINZ online at My Account, at WINZ offices or by calling 0800 559 009.

QLD Seaforth Stay

GO Holidays advises of a special for Queensland's Oaks Seaforth Resort. Seven-nights is priced from \$515pp d/s in a one bedroom apartment. On sale to 15 Sep for travel to 15 Sep. GO has details.

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QLD Art Event

The Queensland Art Gallery|Gallery of Modern Art (QAGOMA) will host 83 artists from 32 countries in an exhibition it says is the world's largest focused on art from Australia, Asia and the Pacific 21 Nov – 10 Apr. The 8th Asia Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art (APT8) will include works from artists Mongolia, Nepal, Kyrgyz Republic, Iraq and Georgia for the first time in its 22 year history. Exhibitions include sculptures, immersive installations, interactive performances and kinetic artwork. Entry is free. Details, qagoma.qld.gov.au

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World Cruise Appeals To Kiwis

Silversea has seen a steady increase in the number of New Zealand passengers booking its ultra-luxury World Cruise over the last three years, so it expects the news that its 2017 voyage is now open for bookings will be welcomed.

Silversea general manager & director sales/marketing Australasia Karen Christensen says easy access to San Francisco, where the voyage departs, coupled with its all-inclusive amenities, have contributed to this growth. The 116-day ocean voyage from San Francisco to Monte Carlo, aboard Silver Whisper, departing 06 Jan 2017, includes 62 destinations in 25 countries. Highlights include Bali, Sandakan, Hong Kong, Singapore, India, Arabia, the Mediterra-

nean, Australia and New Zealand. Christensen says world voyages are all about cultural immersion, new discoveries, and having time to get to know your fellow travellers.

Guests sailing the full 116 days of World Cruise 2017 will enjoy a gala reception, accommodation in SFO, baggage valet service and transfers between the airport, hotel and Silver Whisper, a USD4000 onboard spending credit, complimentary laundry service, commemorative gifts, dry cleaning service and free unlimited Wi-Fi.

... Agent Opportunities

"World Cruise 2017 is a fabulous opportunity for agents as the luxury market can include lucrative commissions," says Christensen. "Access to Silversea's dedicated sales representative in New Zealand ensures our continued commitment and support to agents looking to offer World Cruise 2017 to their clients." Agents can e-mail Silversea sales representative Scott Graham at scottg@silversea.com

Princess Ceremony

Princess Cruises has marked the start of construction of its new ship with a traditional Chinese lion dance during an official keel laying ceremony. The yet to be named Royal Class ship, will be customised to appeal to the China market. It will debut in 2017.

New Terminal For CPT

V&A Waterfront Pty Ltd will invest ZAR179 million in the development of a cruise terminal at the Port of Cape Town that will be able to handle the full passenger complement of liners such as the MSC Symphonia or the Opera, which is good news since vessels of more than 200m were banned from berthing at the Waterfront in 2012. A dedicated cruise terminal in Cape Town was first announced that same year but there have been several holdups. The facility is expected to welcome 10,000 visitors annually, injecting around ZAR200m in the local economy.

Disney Dream Come True

Young travellers are in for a treat when Bibbidi Bobbidi Boutique debuts on the Disney Magic, in Sep. The salon, for children aged three-12, will feature on Deck 10 in the forward part of the ship and will see 'fairy godmothers' makeover the kids to their favourite character, such as a Disney princess, royal knight and more. Cruisers on its transatlantic voyage from Spain to Miami, departing 19 Sep will be the first to enjoy the boutique. The Disney Magic will then sail four- and five-night voyages from Miami to the Bahamas and Caribbean.

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Mediterranean Cruising With SeaDream

SeaDream Yacht Club advises of its nine-day Mediterranean cruise, which covers Rome's port of Civitavecchia, the Italian Riviera's Portofino, Monte Carlo and St Tropez, Barcelona and Valencia, as well as Malaga on Spain's Costa del Sol. The price starts from USD4948pp s/t, including ocean-view accommodation, wines with lunch and dinner, open bars with premium brands, gratuities, a golf simulator, use of power and sail water-sports where locally permitted, mountain bikes for shore explorations and all port charges and taxes. The voyage will also host a number of wine-focused activities including complimentary tastings as well as optional visits to wineries and an optional Winemaker Dinner, which are at an additional cost. See seadream.com for more.

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SYD Hotel Tops

Four Seasons Hotel Sydney has taken out the top prize as the #1 City Hotel in Australia, New Zealand and the South Pacific as decided by readers of *Travel + Leisure* in the magazine's annual survey. The property has recently undergone numerous refurbishment including the opening of Pei Modern by Chef Mark Best of award-winning Sydney restaurant, Marquee and the arrival of Endota Spa.



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Low AUD Worries Aus Tourism Industry

Australian tourism businesses are concerned about the impact of the weakening AUD, despite the positive effect it is having on inbound tourism, according to a new survey by the Tourism and Transport Forum Australia and MasterCard.

"While a cheaper Aussie dollar is generally good news for Australia's tourism, the industry remains concerned about the negative impact of the currency exchange rates on their business," says TTF chief Margy Osmond. "This is most likely the result of the currency not depreciating by as much against the currencies of key tourism source markets such as New Zealand, the UK and Europe."

The survey also found that access to labour is a concern for many businesses, and that Australia's reputation as a desirable destination is under pressure.

"With intense competition for international visitors, we need to work hard to cement Australia's status as a

great destination through consistent and well-funded marketing campaigns," says Osmond.

"We also need to address the taxes and charges on tourists which harm Australia's appeal with international visitors and act as a handbrake on an industry with huge job-creating potential."



Virgin Atlantic 787 On LHR-HKG

Virgin Atlantic's Dreamliner has launched on the London Heathrow-Hong Kong route, bringing with it a new Upper Class Suite, refreshed Premium Economy cabin with a more comfortable seat and Wander Wall social space, and newly designed economy seats. The Virgin Atlantic Clubhouse at Chek Lap Kok has also been refreshed, with the introduction of open plan banquet seating, high definition television and new armchairs.

Top Deck Europe Deal

Those who book and pay in full before 31 Aug will qualify for a 10% discount on Top Deck's Grand European programme. Cost is from \$3758 pp for the 28-day adventure and includes five nights' hotel upgrade, 12 hostel nights, eight bungalow nights and two nights in an Austrian Gasthof. Also included is 27 breakfasts, nine lunches, 16 dinners, ferry fare across the English Channel and guided tours in major cities. The itinerary includes Paris, Swiss Alps, Avignon, Barcelona, French Riviera, Rome, Florence, Venice, Pag Island, Ljubljana, Austrian Alps, Prague, Berlin and Amsterdam. Departures to 27 Sep. Details, topdeck.travel

COMO Aus

Singapore's COMO Hotels and Resorts will make its first entry into Australia's hotel market on the site of Perth's Old Treasury Buildings, in the soon-to-be-completed Cathedral Square precinct, advises Tourism Western Australia. The 48-room hotel will be complemented by wining, dining and retail outlets, including a rumoured landmark rooftop restaurant housed in a glass box. Cathedral Square is an AUD584 million development scheduled for completion in the second half of 2015.

Exotic Anzac 2016

Fez Travel Turkey's New Zealand GSA Exotic Holidays has released its new Gallipoli brochure, showcasing Anzac tour options for 2016 as well as tips for first-time Anzac travellers on what to expect.

Tour options range from the two-day Trooper Tour to the 16-day Colonel Tour, with prices starting from \$525pp. Fez operates tours to the Gallipoli battlefields all year and has offices throughout Turkey, Exotic notes.

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Whales In Queensland

Sunreef Mooloolaba's swim with whales season kicked off earlier this month and runs through until Oct, offering half-day trips on one of Sunreef's boats as well as full-day trips on Australia Zoo's research vessel Croc One.

Sunreef were the first operators in Australia to offer the swim with the whales experience when they launched last year.

"The whales are starting to appear regularly now in waters off the Sunshine Coast, but Jul is when the real action kicks off, with thousands anticipated to swim and play through the Sunshine Coast waters," says Sunreef Whale Encounter supervisor Dan Hart.

Clients should expect a four-hour or seven-hour round trip, with a maximum of 20 participants on each trip. Once a whale is sighted, the boat is put into neutral at least 100m away, and if it's safe the boat is turned off and swimmers are allowed into the water holding on to the floating line attached to the boat. From this point it's up to the whale.

See sunreef.com.au

Fort Worth Convention & Visitors Bureau has released 15 in '15, a check list of 15 activities for this summer season.

These include paddleboarding, kayaking or canoeing the Trinity River from the downtown beach; attending a Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra Concert in the Garden; getting wild at the new Safari Splash at the Fort Worth Zoo; experiencing the sights and sounds of the Old West with the Stockyards Adventure Pass; or floating the evening away at Rockin' the River with local bands and brews.

Clients can enjoy the café culture on mile-long Magnolia Avenue on the Near Southside; ride horses along the Trinity Trails; watch stars under the stars at Sundance Square Movie Night in the Plaza; and rock out to free music at Fri on the Green in the Near Southside. There's also putting the top down and catching a movie

at Coyote Drive-In; seeing the only Michelangelo in the Americas at the Kimbell Art Museum; cooling off and sipping on a cold one at one of Fort Worth's seven local craft breweries; walking the Fort Worth Cultural District and watching the Fort Worth Herd, the 'world's only' twice-daily cattle drive. See fortworth.com



Not Too Late To Experience Great Migration

World Journeys advises that it's not too late for last minute bookings to the Masai Mara, where the annual Great Migration is about to take centre stage. There are savings on premium camps and lodges in the area, including stay four, pay three night deals at Saruni Mara, Mahali Mzuri, Mara Serian Camp and Governor's Camp; or stay five/pay four nights at Sala's Camp, with the ability to use the fifth free night at Giraffe Manor if available. See worldjourneys.co.nz

Fun At Lake Tahoe

Lake Tahoe is known for its year-round hosting of festivals, events and concert headliners says its tourism office. Check out the events calendar at tahoesouth.com

Industry Diary

JULY

Globus Family of Brands 2016 North America Launch

Pukekohe: Tue 21, Pukekohe Cosmopolitan Club - Ten Pin Bowling Centre, 78 Nelson Street, 1745.

Globus Family of Brands and Rocky Mountaineer- 2016 North America Launch

Christchurch: Tue 21, Tequila Mockingbird, 98 Victoria Street, 1745.
Invercargill: Thu 23, Super Bowl, 105 Kelvin Street, 1745.

South Pacific Association of National Tourism Offices

Nelson: Tue 21, the Suburban Club, 1730.

OzFocus Auckland

Auckland: Thu 23, Travel Corporation offices 131 New North Rd, Eden Terrace from 1800.

AUGUST

Bula Marau Fiji Roadshow - Around Viti Levu

Christchurch: Mon 3, Novotel Christchurch, 1730-2030.

Wellington: Tue 4, InterContinental,

1730-2030. **Auckland:** Wed 5, Stamford Hotel, 1730-2045.

Hamilton: Thu 6, Novotel Tainui, 1730-2030.

World of Accor

Auckland: Thu 06, the Pullman hotel, 1600-2000.

Anaheim Roadshow

Auckland: Mon 24, The Hilton, 1730.

South Pacific Association of National Tourism Offices

Napier: Tue 25, the Crown Hotel, 1730.

Cruise WA

Auckland: Wed 26, the CICC building, 100 Beaumont Street, 2 sessions - 1430 and 1800.

TAANZ National Travel Industry Awards 2015

Auckland: Fri 28, the Aviation Hall, MOTAT, from 1800.

SEPTEMBER

Insight Vacations Launch Breakfast with CEO John Boulding

Christchurch: Mon 07, Function Room, Ilex Botanic Gardens, Hagley Park, AM (TBA).

TAANZ AGM

Auckland: Wed 09, Heritage Hotel, from 1500.

A Day in WA, with ATEC and Tourism Western Australia

Auckland: Thu 10, the CICC building, 100 Beaumont Street.

Royal Caribbean - New Zealand's Travel Has Talent Grand Final

Auckland: Fri 11, the Pullman hotel.

Globus / Cosmos Europe 2016 Launch

Hamilton: Tue 15, pm.

Christchurch: Tue 15, pm.

Auckland Nth Shore: Wed 16, am.

Tauranga: Wed 16, pm. **Dunedin:** Wed 16, pm. **Napier:** Thu 17, pm.

Invercargill: Thu 17, pm. **Auckland East:** Thu 17, am. **Lower Hutt:** Tue 22, pm. **Wellington:** Tue 22, am.

Whangarei: Tue 22, am.

Nelson: Wed 23, pm.

Palmerston North: Wed 23, pm.

Kerikeri: Wed 23, am.

Queenstown: Wed 23, am.

Wanganui: Thu 24, am.

New Plymouth: Thu 24, pm.

Blenheim: Thu 24, pm.

Greek Island Hopping

Mykonos, Paro and Santorini all feature in Top Deck's 10-day Greek Island Hopper, from \$1701pp. Included is nine nights' hotel accommodation, nine breakfasts and two dinners, port to hotel transfers and island ferry transfers. The itinerary departs from Athens and participants must make their own way to the Greek capital. Those who book and pay by 31 Aug qualify for a 10% discount. Departures are to 08 Oct. Details, topdeck.travel

Pukekohe: Tue 29, pm. **Timaru:** Wed 30, am. Venues tba.

The Travel Corporation 2016 Launch

Hamilton: Mon 21, PM.

Tauranga: Tue 22, AM.

Auckland: Tue 22, PM.

Christchurch: Wed 23, PM.

Dunedin: Thu 24, PM.

Nelson: Mon 28, AM

Wellington: Mon 28, PM

Hawkes Bay: Tue 29, PM

Palmerston North: Wed 30, PM.

Venues tba.

OCTOBER

The Travel Corporation 2016 Launch

New Plymouth: Thu 01, PM

Venues tba.

Adventure World, Rocky Mountaineer and Holland America Line North America Breakfast

Invercargill: Mon 05, Kelvin Hotel, 0730-0830.

Queenstown: Tue 06, The Exchange Cafe, 0730-0830.

Samoa Focus on MICE

TABS ON
**TRAVEL
TODAY**

Wed 15 Jul 15 p7

Aggie Grey's Hotel: Open in Dec?



All going to plan, come 15 Dec, construction will be complete at Sheraton Samoa Aggie Grey's Hotel & Bungalows, a feat which will be widely celebrated.

The Virgin Australia/Starwood PCO Famil group did a site inspection of the property—which is approximately 18 months into construction—and everyone was encouraged to use their imagination to picture the finished product.

The project has seen each and every room and space of the hotel fully stripped, whilst a number of new additions have been added, including conference and meeting spaces, as well as extra rooms.

Sheraton Samoa director of sales and marketing Carl Amos says he hopes the addition of the conference and

meeting space will help to put Samoa on the map when it comes to MICE delegates choosing where to host their next function.

Once the hotel is up and running, it will add yet another South Pacific MICE destination for agents to sell, he says.

The space includes a ballroom, meeting or break out rooms, indoor and outdoor venues and more, whilst there is audio visual equipment on hand, as well as high speed internet access—at an extra charge—and pre-function space.

Other amenities include a casino, gym, spa, swimming pool and parking.

The refurbished hotel is set to have 173 rooms, including standard rooms, bungalows and suites.

For more information [CLICK HERE](#)

Pictured: **1** Marieke Mendez, Starwood Hotels & Resorts and Carl Amos, Sheraton Samoa checking out the construction site. **2** What the conference space will look like when it's completed. **3** A sample of what the rooms will look like once they are finished.

Venue With A Difference

The Robert Louis Stevenson Museum provides a great option for clients looking for an off-site venue. There are both covered or open-air options available, suitable for meetings, receptions, weddings, cocktail parties and afternoon teas. The space can be hired from 1600 Mon-Fri, or after 1200 on Sat. For more information see <http://rlsmuseum.org/>

Cultural Village

For clients who are short on time and want to experience Samoan culture, they can visit Samoa Tourism Authority's Cultural Village, located near to the centre of Apia. Clients will be able to check out how traditional tattoos are done, see how food is prepared in an 'umu' and also take a look at weaving, painting, carving and more. Plus, every Tue, Wed and Thu there is a cultural show performance from 1030.

... Conference Space

The village also has function space available for hire. For more information and to book, get in touch with STA. See samoa.travel



To Sua Trench, A Popular Excursion For Groups

MICE groups are encouraged to head out to the To Sua Ocean Trench for either a morning or afternoon excursion. The popular swimming site, which is located in Lotofaga village, is also home to a number of beach-facing fales which can be used as a lunch spot. As there is no café or restaurant on-site, guests are encouraged to bring along a packed picnic, however, you must organise this with Samoa Tourism Authority as they need to get permission from owners. An entrance fee of WST20 applies. For more information see samoa.travel

Pictured: **1** The famed To Sua trench. **2** Starwood Hotels & Resorts' Marieke Mendez enjoying the view of the beach in front of To Sua. **3** Winnie Fong from GO Holidays; Kristin Black from Business World Travel; Marieke Mendez from Starwood Hotels & Resorts; and Corrine Dixon from Mondo Travel Rotorua checking out the site before braving the ladder entrance and going for a swim.

