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SA agents 'most stressed'

DEBBIE BADHAM

SOUTH Africans are the most stressed travel professionals in the world.

This is according to a recent Happiness Index study conducted by global travel and hospitality recruitment company, Progressive Personnel.

The survey, which was launched in mid-May, was distributed to travel and hospitality professionals in the UK, North America, the Middle East, Europe, Australia and South Africa to assess their happiness in three key areas: happiness at work, work/life balance and future prospects. Using a rating scale format from 1 (least) to 10 (highest), the survey was segmented by geographic location, gender and generation. In South Africa, 172 travel professionals completed the survey.

The study found that South African travel professionals were more stressed than their global counterparts, with a poorer rating of work/life balance and future work prospects.

Results show that South African Millennials are the least happy group of travel professionals, scoring just 5,3 on their total score for the Happiness Index. North American Millennials are the happiest with a total score of 7,3. Baby Boomers are the

happiest generation of travel professionals.

Other results revealed that Australian travel professionals believe themselves to be the least fairly remunerated travel professionals globally. Australians and British professionals feel less valued and respected in their job than their global counterparts. North Americans, who are the world's happiest, most satisfied and motivated travel professionals, are most likely to stay in travel in future.

“We’re not undertakers, we’re selling people their dream holidays. And while it’s highly stressful, it’s also really exciting.”

Under pressure

There are a number of pressures within the travel environment that may be contributing to the high level of stress experienced by local professionals, industry experts say.

Two significant factors that differentiate the South African sector from other global markets are geographic position and the higher percentage of corporate travel management, says **Mladen Lukic**, gm of Travel Counsellors SA. “Our global counterparts

conduct significantly fewer transactions per journey,” he says, adding that SA agents work at a greater capacity.

Local travel agents are under an increasing amount of pressure, says **Marco Ciocchetti**, ceo of the XL Travel Group. He says agents are operating in a very different industry compared with 20 years ago; one in which perks and opportunities are limited. Work-life balance has also become more challenging, he says. “Travel is now no different to any other job; we’re just paid less,” he says.

The ability of travel companies to remunerate their people well is a definite concern, agrees **Ben Langner**, md of Carlson Wagonlit Travel South Africa. The corporate travel industry is highly competitive, servicing clients who are under huge strain to reduce costs, he says. “There is a big focus on cost containment. Agents are under a lot of pressure to offer the best possible service at the lowest possible cost.”

Commenting on the marked dissatisfaction of Millennials in particular, **Garth Wolff**, founder and ceo of the eTravel Group, says it likely has less to do with travel specifically and is more about the pace at which Millennials function and their lack of interest in sitting behind a desk.

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Wanna be a winner?

What are your operational needs? Travelinfo is running a survey to find out. All agents who complete the survey will go into a draw for two economy-class tickets (excluding taxes) to the US on Delta Air Lines. There is a R1 000 lucky draw that takes place every day until July 4 and a draw for the grand prize will take place on July 5. The survey can be accessed on the eTNW website. Pictured here is **Sue Newman** (left) sales co-ordinator of Delta Air Lines SA, with **Linda van der Pol**, divisional head, Travelinfo. Photo: Shannon Van Zyl

SAA, Mango under investigation

THE Competition Commission has confirmed it will launch an investigation into the alleged collusion between SAA and Mango and the reported subleasing of aircraft from SAA to Mango at discounted rates. This comes after the Commission received what it called a “valid complaint” from the

Democratic Alliance (DA) last week.

Following Mango ceo, **Nico Bezuidenhout's**, resignation, SAA released a statement saying it had subsidised the LCC through discounted aircraft subleases (see TNW June 22). A few days later, SAA backtracked and

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Top web stories



- Protea Hotels 'rebrands'
- TNW pick: FSB places industry under scrutiny
- Win 2 tickets to the US or your share of R10 000 cash!
- Tourism VAT threat hangs over East African country
- Monday Smile: Cape what?

Turkish boosts Cape Town route

TARYN NIGHTINGALE

TURKISH Airlines will dedicate direct daily flights to Cape Town from Istanbul, effective October 30. Currently, the airline flies daily to the Mother City via Durban and Johannesburg.

"Last year we operated our first Cape Town to Istanbul direct seasonal flight and it was a great success," says **Kenan Ince**, Cape Town gm of Turkish Airlines. "However, because of fleet constraints and availability, it made better sense to operate the flights from Cape Town via Johannesburg and Durban."

The airline is to receive 30 new aircraft this year and will be deploying an Airbus 330 on its non-stop flight from the Mother City to Istanbul.

The aircraft will have 261 seats in economy and 28 in business class.

"This will increase our seat capacity on the route by almost 50%," says Kenan, adding that the increase in seat volume is likely to see a decrease in fares on the route.

Flight TK45 will depart CPT at 18h00 to arrive in IST at 04h50 the next day; return flight TK44 will depart IST at 01h40 to arrive in CPT at 11h55.

As a result of the direct Cape Town route, flights from Durban to Istanbul, operating via Johannesburg, will increase from four to five flights a week, effective October 31.

Flight TK 43 will depart DBN on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, Saturdays and Sundays at 16h50 to arrive in JNB at 18h10, departing at 19h25 to arrive in IST at 05h10 the next day. Return flight TK 42 will depart IST on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays at 19h55 to arrive in JNB at 05h55 the next day departing at 07h10 to arrive in DBN at 08h25. ■

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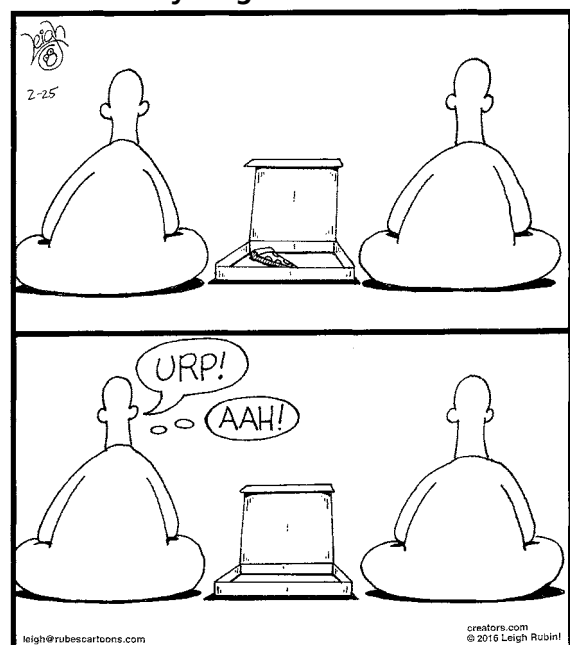
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To the point



Air Zimbabwe is set to resume its Harare-London service after stopping flights four years ago. Marketing manager, **Christopher Kwenda**, said the airline had applied for a route licence and was awaiting the UK authority's response. "We had targeted the beginning of July but there are new licensing requirements from the UK and the EU. We will know the exact dates as soon as we satisfy those requirements," Christopher said. "Operating equipment and the crew are already in place. Once the route licence has been issued, we will be ready to commence operations." Air Zimbabwe was forced to terminate the route in 2012 and is now negotiating to clear a US\$2,8m (R41,2m) debt owed to the UK air navigation agency.

Rubes® By Leigh Rubin



From outer piece to inner peace

SA agents 'most stressed'

From page 1

Perhaps the trade does not place enough emphasis on how much there is to love about travel, says Garth. "We're not undertakers,

we're selling people their dream holidays. And while it's highly stressful, it's also really exciting." Agents should be careful not to allow their own stress or

unhappiness affect their ability to sell travel, he adds. "Agents need to put a smile on their face when they phone their clients. If you're grumpy, clients can hear it."

Happiness Index – local landscape

The index also looked at the SA market in particular and found:

- Overall, South African travel professionals are generally satisfied with their job, with an average rating of 7 out of 10.
- Female travel professionals are generally happier than their male counterparts. The only area where they indicated they were less

satisfied was when asked if they felt respected and valued in their jobs.

- Millennials are less motivated at work than other generations. Compared with other generations, Millennials are least satisfied with their remuneration in their male counterparts. Male professionals have a more negative perception of their

remuneration level than their female counterparts.

- When it comes to discrimination in the workplace, South African professionals perceive there to be less equal opportunity than elsewhere in the world. Interestingly, however, South African women feel there is more equal opportunity than men. ■

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Federal Airlines to launch new route

EFFECTIVE January 2017, Federal Airlines will start operating four weekly flights between Kruger Mpumalanga International Airport (KMIA) and the Phinda Private Game Reserve in

KwaZulu Natal.

The new flights will connect Phinda to flights to Cape Town, Livingstone and Vilanculos via KMIA. Operators can also connect the reserve to others,

including Madikwe, the Sabi Sand and the Greater Kruger, using Federal Airlines' services.

The airline will continue to offer direct return flights from Johannesburg to Phinda. ■

Tourism VAT a threat for Tanzania

KIM EMMANUEL

A PROPOSED 18% VAT on tourism services in Tanzania works against the government's goal of increasing tourist numbers to two million in 2017, industry experts say.

Sirili Akko, executive secretary of the Tanzania Association of Tour Operators, said the country's Finance Minister, Dr **Philip Mpango**, had proposed an

18% VAT charge on tourist services in his recent budget, with effect from July 1.

Tourism services that could be taxed include supplies of tourist guiding services, game drives, water safaris, animal or bird watching, park entrance fees, and ground transportation services.

Wilbard Chambulo, md of Kibo Guides and Tanganyika Wilderness Camps, said Kenya had introduced 16%

VAT on tourism in 2015/16 and failed.

"Tanzania should avoid the same mistake, otherwise our neighbours will capitalise and have a free ride on our mistakes," added Sirili.

Wilbard said the VAT would negatively impact the tourism industry and also pointed out that the July deadline did not allow time to implement the charge and asked who would bear the extra cost. ■

Gina Richter selects the top specials from Travelinfo

- **Century City Hotel**, Cape Town. Family offer – book a room for R750pps and receive an inter-connecting room for the kids free. Offer includes unlimited WiFi, breakfast and parking. Minimum two-night stay applies. Valid until August 31.
- **On the Go Tours**. Russia sale – book any Russia group tours departing August 31 and save 20% on the tour price, or travel by December 31 to receive a 10% discount. Offer is valid for new bookings only. Book by June 30.
- **Azure Travel**. Thailand ten-night special from R15 695pps. Offer includes return flights from Johannesburg on Cathay Pacific, three nights in Krabi Cha Da Resort, three nights in Phi Phi Erawan Palms, four nights in Phuket Andaman Cannacia, all road and boat transfers and breakfast daily. Package excludes taxes of approximately R1 050pp. Offer is not valid during school holidays and public holidays. Valid for travel until October 31.
- **Travel Vision**. Mauritius special from R14 621pps. Rate includes return flights from Johannesburg, approximate taxes, return transfers, seven nights' accommodation with breakfast daily. Valid for travel until October 31.



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Branson's exclusive property now open for bookings

HILKA BIRNS

VIRGIN Limited Edition, Sir **Richard Branson's** privately owned collection of luxury hotels and retreats, has announced the opening of an exclusive Manor House at Mont Rochelle Hotel and Mountain Vineyard in Franschoek.

The Manor House is within walking distance of the main hotel and can accommodate eight adults in four luxury suites and six children in a bunk room. Facilities include a 'winter' lounge and a games room, an open-plan lounge/dining room and an outdoor plunge pool. There is also an outdoor dining

area, gym and a heated outdoor swimming pool.

A dedicated team and private chef take care of guests, arranging private dining, spa treatments, horseback riding and wine tasting.

Guests can also choose either a three-course lunch or dinner daily in one of the main hotel's two restaurants at no additional cost. All drinks (including alcohol) are included.

The Manor House is available for exclusive stays of two nights or more year-round and rates start from R46 800 per night on the basis of eight adults sharing.

Meanwhile, the 22-room Mont Rochelle Hotel is offering a romance package for two people, priced from R12 748 in low season. This includes three nights' accommodation on a B&B basis; wine tasting; a picnic and spa treatments. Group bookings of five to 10 rooms for a minimum two-night stay are available at a single fixed rate of R3 720 per room per night until September 30.

The hotel's exclusive-use rate until September 30 is R116 830 per night and it is offering a 50% discount on this rate for the final night's stay for bookings of two nights or more. ■

To the point

Asata has relaunched its mobile app, which is sponsored by Amadeus, with a range of new functionality that will make communicating with the association easier for members. In addition to an event calendar and RSVP facilities, members have access to important documents, newsletters, comments, important notices and polls. Members who want to download the app, can visit Apple iStore and Android.

Air Mauritius grows network

AIR Mauritius has taken another step in its strategy to expand its network with the launch of weekly flights to Tanzania.

"We have launched a weekly flight to Dar es Salaam to address the need for more connectivity."

Dar es Salaam is served every Friday by an A319 on a triangular flight operating Mauritius-Dar es Salaam-Nairobi-Mauritius.

At the recent launch of the Dar es Salaam flights, Air Mauritius chairman, **Arjoon Suddho**, said the airline had 26 weekly flights to the African continent following the addition of the new destination.

"We have launched a weekly flight to Dar es Salaam in a bid to address the need for more connectivity to give travellers from Mauritius easy access to East Africa," he said.

Air Mauritius ceo, **Megh Pillay**, said the new flights would contribute to feeding the air corridor that linked Africa and Asia via the hubs of Mauritius and Singapore.

In early May the airline launched weekly flights to Maputo with the return flight via Durban.

Kenya Association of Tour Operators Coast Branch chairperson, **Monika Solanki**, said the Air Mauritius flights would connect the Indian Ocean islands with East Africa, attracting international holidaymakers to the region. ■



Mango has signed a new multi-year full content agreement with Travelport offering Travelport-connected agencies in 180 countries real-time access to its fares and inventory-through the Travel Commerce Platform. Like other low cost carriers partnering with Travelport, Mango will use Travelport's merchandising solution to effectively display its full range of products and services through the intermediary channels in the same way Mango's content is displayed on its website.



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A brief look at this week's hotel news

Property group revamps loyalty programme
 AHA Hotels & Lodges has launched Real Rewards, a refreshed loyalty programme for its entire portfolio. The new programme has a three-tier offering: Classic Green is free; Plus Green offers additional benefits for R495 per annum; and Premium Green gives members a bouquet of benefits for R1 495 per annum. Members can expect benefits that include complimentary coffee and room upgrades, bi-weekly exclusive special offers, cash back on accommodation spend and discounts at aha properties, spas and restaurants. More information can be found on the hotel's website.

Windhoek resort refurbishes rooms
 WINDHOEK Country Club Resort has refurbished 26 guest rooms. The bathrooms have been rebuilt, and all rooms now have separate bath and shower. The rooms have been repainted and have new furniture, fittings and wallpaper. The remaining rooms' refurbishment will be done in stages during the next few months.

New campsite for Zimbabwe
 SHEARWATER Village, a new campsite close to the Victoria Falls in Zimbabwe, is due to open in December. The village will comprise 10 private camp sites, each able to take eight guests; three overland truck sites, each taking up to 24 guests; and 12 en-suite chalets with air-conditioning. Facilities include a restaurant, pool, bar, laundry, WiFi, on-site bakery and café, coffee roasting operation, activity booking centre and retail shop. The village is surrounded by gardens and is close to the craft markets, Ilala lodge and Elephant's Walk Shopping and Artists Village.

Okavango activities resume

TESSA REED

OPERATORS in Botswana's Okavango Delta, including Sanctuary Retreats, Wilderness Safaris and &Beyond, have confirmed that water-based activities

are up and running after low water levels affected the activities earlier this year. The Delta annual flood has just reached Maun and is very welcome, says Botswana Footprints director, **Tara Flory**, adding that excessive flooding is

not expected this year. "All boating activities have resumed in the Delta and we are running mokoro rides and boat trips as normal – where available," says **Robert Dixon**, senior marketing & digital manager at Sanctuary Retreats. ■

Regent's 'most luxurious' ship to set sail

THE *Seven Seas Explorer*, dubbed "the most luxurious ship ever built" by Regent Seven Seas, sets sail on July 20.

The luxury liner's maiden voyage begins in Europe before it heads to Miami

for a series of Caribbean voyages.

"Carrying 750 guests, it features one of the highest space ratios in the cruise business and has extravagantly designed lounges and showplaces

and gourmet restaurants," the cruise line said in a statement.

The all-suite ship is home to the Regent Suite, a 360 sqm luxury suite with an in-suite spa offering complimentary treatments. ■

For the record

In the Youth Month feature (*TNW*, June 22, 2016) in the article 'Gauteng is capturing young imaginations', Curiocty Backpackers was incorrectly spelt as Curiosity Backpackers. *TNW* apologises for the error.

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Kenya plans mega conference centre

PLANS are under way for the Kenyan government to construct a 5 000-seat international convention centre in Mombasa.

Kenyan Tourism Minister, **Najib Balala**, said the government was looking for land in the coastal city to build a modern conference centre in a bid to attract more international meetings. The conference project, he added, might start any time this year if the government got suitable land within Mombasa county.

The Minister said that the proposed conference centre was Kenya's Vision 2030 flagship project, which aimed to

uplift tourism at the coast.

He said the facility would have spacious conference rooms, offices, modern furniture and equipment to create an enabling environment for international events.

"International meeting organisers prefer to hold conferences in Mombasa due to its beautiful beaches, warm weather and the Indian Ocean," he said. "Unfortunately, Mombasa doesn't have a convention centre, forcing organisers to take meetings elsewhere. That's why the government is determined to build the facility this year." ■

Air Sey launches web check-in

AIR Seychelles has launched an online check-in service and updated its baggage allowance.

The web check-in feature allows passengers on all Air Seychelles flights from Mahé and Praslin to check in and print their boarding passes online through the website.

For international flights, travellers

can check in from 24 hours and up to two hours before departure time, and for domestic flights, check-in opens 24 hours in advance up to just 60 minutes before the flight.

The updated baggage policy sees excess baggage charges reduced and many routes have simplified to the piece concept. ■



Tips from Louis the Lawyer – CPA

Advocate Louis Nel discusses responsible consumer behaviour and how it relates to non-refundable deposits and cancellation fees.

WHEN considering your rights as a service provider you need to understand what the Consumer Protection Act (CPA) says about responsible consumer behaviour as it relates to non-refundable deposits and cancellation fees.

The CPA stresses that consumers cannot act recklessly and without proper regard for the common law principles discussed in my first column on the CPA (see *TNW*, May 4), entering into transactions under the impression that the CPA will come to their rescue. It says that if the consumer fails to behave responsibly in their choice and behaviour, the common law will prevail (section 3).

According to Section 3 (1)(b) suppliers do, however, need to take care when dealing with consumers who fall under the following categories:

- Consumers who earn a low income or who come from low-income communities;
- Consumers who live in remote, isolated areas or areas with a low-density population;
- Seniors or other similarly

vulnerable consumers;

- Consumers whose ability to read and understand any advertisement, agreement, mark, instruction, label, warning, notice or other visual representation is limited because of low literacy, vision impairment or limited fluency in the language in which the communication is produced.

What to do?

- Be aware of your rights as a supplier according to the CPA.
- Know your traveller. For example: have they travelled before to that destination? Are they participating in activities or renting a car? Are they seniors, earning a low income or possibly illiterate with special needs or language barriers?
- Walk the traveller through the relevant travel documents and travel experience.
- Slow down – don't rush the sale!
- Make sure the traveller acknowledges that you have walked them through the above processes by signing or at least initialling the relevant clauses or travel guidelines. ■

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AIRLINE NETWORKS AND HUBS

Ongoing developments across Africa are creating more convenient travel options for South African travellers. Darise Foster reports.

New developments drive greater connectivity

THE development of hubs across Africa, coupled with increased connection options from South Africa, has led to an increase in choice and convenience for local travellers.

Johannesburg, Cairo, Lagos, Nairobi and Addis Ababa are the top five hubs in Africa, according to Plane Talking md, **Linden Birns**.

Johannesburg has always been, and will continue to be, significant for the African continent, says **June Crawford**, ceo of Barsa. "Nairobi will also always be a dominant player because of its geographic position," she says. However, other emerging hubs are rapidly growing in importance.

Addis Ababa, in particular, has seen significant development over the past 10 years. The hub is convenient for travellers both in terms of its geographic location and connections onwards that are offered through its home-based carrier Ethiopian Airlines.

"When a new terminal was built in 2005, it was done so with consideration for the upcoming decade. In that time, Ethiopian as an airline has grown tremendously – especially over the past 10 years during which we have seen almost 25% growth year-on-year in terms of passenger numbers, revenue and operating profits," says Ethiopian Airlines' regional manager for Southern Africa, **Abel Alemu**.

"This, in turn, has brought more passengers to Addis Ababa," he says.

According to Abel, 70% of Ethiopian Airlines' passengers transit through

Addis Ababa. The airline currently has an annual passenger count of seven million passengers, he says.

"This is mainly because more Africans are travelling and more foreign countries are investing in Africa. As such, there is more traffic coming into the continent as well," says Abel.

Ethiopia – being in East Africa – is at a crossroads between three continents, Abel says.

"Europe is a maximum of four hours away, the Middle Eastern airspace is a two-hour flight and of course it is not too far from any point in Africa. So there is a population of 5,3 billion within a 10-hour radius of Addis. This, coupled with ET's large number of direct flights on offer from Addis, give us a geographical advantage to connect passengers further than any other African hub."

Abel reveals that most of the traffic out of Africa is travelling to India, China and the Gulf region.

Access via the Indian Ocean Islands

Mauritius is another hub that offers an increasing number of convenient connections for South African travellers through its home-based carrier Air Mauritius.

As a result of increasing traffic between China and Africa specifically, Air Mauritius will launch flights to Guangzhou on July 12.

The airline offers more direct connections to the Far East than any other African carrier, says Air Mauritius regional manager for Africa and Latin America, **Carla Da Silva**. "Mauritius is centralised between Africa

and Australasia, offering travellers less flying time from South Africa to these destinations," she says.

A flight to India, for example, is between five and six hours from Mauritius. A flight to Perth is seven hours, and Mauritius is just four hours away from South Africa.

"Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolan International Airport is a first-class airport that was totally revamped and overhauled recently with the objective of transiting passengers enjoying an easier and more comfortable process," says Carla.

For business travellers, the airport also offers an established business centre that includes high-speed Internet access. "There is also a kids' corner for families travelling via Mauritius," Carla adds.

Greater options are offered via the Seychelles as well, through Air Seychelles' partnerships with SAA and Jet Airways. Travellers from around South Africa can fly into Johannesburg on SAA, then connect to the Seychelles on Air Seychelles. Those visiting India can then make use of the airline's partnership with Jet Airways, which affords Air Seychelles passengers flying into Mumbai the opportunity to connect on to nine onward codeshare points within India.

"Furthermore, we also provide access to the United Arab Emirates and to the expanded codeshare network of the Etihad Airways Partners group consisting of Etihad Airways, Alitalia, airberlin, Air Serbia, Etihad Regional and NIKI," an Air Seychelles representative told TNW.

Book it!

South African Airways will introduce economy-class promotional fares between Johannesburg and Maputo, effective for all sales on or before July 13. Travellers can pay R370 return, excluding taxes, to fly from Johannesburg to Maputo. Travellers can pay MZN100 (R254) return excluding taxes to fly from Maputo to Johannesburg. Travel is valid on or before September 30.

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More options for local travellers

DOMESTICALLY, both Cape Town and Durban are growing in importance when it comes to convenient connections for South African travellers.

Ethiopian Airlines will increase its number of direct flights between Addis Ababa and Cape Town from two flights weekly to four weekly flights, effective July 1. The airline joins British Airways, Turkish Airlines, Lufthansa, Thomas Cook Airlines and Kenya Airways in the list of airlines placing more focus on Cape Town as part of their route networks.

"Carriers are realising that travellers do not want to connect through Johannesburg, and are responding to that demand by introducing direct flights out of Cape Town," says Fly Blue Crane coo, **Theunis Potgieter**.

Fly Blue Crane will launch direct flights between Windhoek and Cape Town – its first regional route –



"This strategy has been dubbed the 'Airlift Strategy,' and is centred on creating sustainable routes with selected markets."

June Crawford

later this year.

Wesgro, the official tourism, trade and investment promotion agency in the Western Cape, devised an initiative to

create airlift opportunities into Cape Town in partnership with Acsa and the City of Cape Town. According to **June Crawford**, ceo of Barsa, this strategy has been dubbed the 'Airlift Strategy,' and is centred on creating sustainable routes with selected markets.

"This initiative has resulted in a Cape Town-Kenya route launching in July (operated by Kenya Airways), which creates significant access into a key hub in Africa," she says. This could be a great model for the rest of South Africa to use as a lesson in facilitating airlines into South Africa and opening new, key networks, June adds.

Durban's King Shaka International Airport is also growing in significance, she adds, with Qatar Airways and Turkish Airlines operating a direct service on this route.

This growth could be largely due to the KwaZulu

Natal government being proactive in creating opportunities for this to happen, says June. "This could also be due to the Bilateral Air Service Agreement between South Africa and the United Arab Emirates," she adds.

Proflight Zambia and Ethiopian Airlines also launched direct services to Durban recently. Ethiopian flies to 52 destinations across Africa, connecting through its hub in Addis Ababa.

Theunis predicts that Durban will follow a similar trend to Cape Town in that more airlines will launch direct services to the destination. "However, the tourist market in Durban is not as big as that of Cape Town, therefore the impact will not be as large as it has been in Cape Town," he says. "Nonetheless, OR Tambo International Airport will always be the predominant hub for South Africa."

News flash!

Air France launched services to New York's JFK airport from Paris-Orly Airport on June 6. The daily flights are operated by a Boeing 777-200, with 35 seats in business class, 24 in premium economy and 250 seats in economy.

"Our customers thus benefit from optimised connections without having to change airports," the airline said in a statement.

Flight AF032 departs Paris-Orly at 11h20 to arrive at New York's JFK at 13h25. Return flight AF037 departs New York JFK at 18h25 to arrive at Paris-Orly at 07h45 the next day. In addition, Air France now offers La Première, Flying Blue Elite Plus members and business passengers a brand-new lounge in Hall 3 at Paris-Orly Airport. The lounge is open from 05h30 to 22h00 daily.

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Airlink plans more flights from Wonderboom

MICHELLE COLMAN

IT'S almost a year since SA Airlink commenced flights between Pretoria and Cape Town from Wonderboom Airport, giving residents in the capital and surrounds a means of getting to the Mother City through an uncrowded airport, with reduced check-in times.

The airline commenced with an initial three return flights daily, but reduced this to two. Says ceo, **Rodger Foster**: "There have been some inhibitors such as the K97 off ramp to the Platinum highway not being open, but these are all being addressed and in due course airport access will be quicker and easier and volume growth will accelerate."

The airline is keen to have the third flight reinstated as soon as passenger numbers dictate, in order to provide more optimal flight timings to cater for the complex needs of its customers. "Airlink plans to increase frequency in the

near future without adding more capacity than the market can sustainably absorb," says Rodger. He says the flight attracts a blend of leisure and business travellers, that vary by the time of day, day of the week and leisure seasonality. "Our flight times aim at all facets of the market"

Airlink hopes to introduce flights from Pretoria to Durban, and from Pretoria to Port Elizabeth, in the future. These plans will be activated once the Pretoria-Cape Town service matures.

The airport is keen to encourage more carriers to use its facilities, and a Council Resolution taken by the Tshwane municipality in 2012 gives it the green light to pursue service level agreements with airlines whose fleet and operations meet the technical limitations of its infrastructure.

One of those limitations is noise. A spokesman points out that, at present, the

airport uses a noise limitation guideline to determine the number of scheduled flight movements that can be allowed within the operational hours of 06h00 to 22h00, to avoid affecting the surrounding community negatively.

Although noise levels depend on aircraft type, it is fairly safe to assume that some 60 scheduled flights a day (30 inbound and 30 outbound) can be handled with ease.

Passenger facilities at Wonderboom include undercover car parking, security services, a modern departure hall, arrivals hall with an electronic carousel, baggage trolleys, restaurant, hotel, kiosks, numerous vehicle-hire companies, taxis, a tourism/information centre, air ticket sale offices, and a clinic for medical emergencies.

Recently opened at Wonderboom Airport is the Grey Sunbird Business Class lounge, operated in partnership with SA Airlink



Airlink expects passenger volumes from Wonderboom to increase. Photo: Airlink

and SAA. Business-class passengers, SAA Voyager Lifetime Platinum, Platinum and Gold members with one guest can use the lounge.

The airport has made a submission to obtain international status. Once it is granted, provision will be made for international passengers.

News flash!

Delta Air Lines has launched 30 seasonal routes to 19 cities across Europe. Seasonal flying, where Delta operates routes during peak demand times, is particularly important on the transatlantic where demand is typically 50% higher from leisure travellers during the summer vacation period but weaker during the winter. As part of its summer schedule, Delta is increasing services between Rome and the US, including a new route to Minneapolis and flights to Detroit. Other year-round markets with new services include Munich, Germany, to Detroit and Reykjavik, Iceland, to Minneapolis.

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Heathrow expansion would improve customer experience

WHILE the debate over the proposed expansion of Heathrow Airport continues to rage on, Heathrow Airport Holdings maintains that an additional runway and new terminal building will improve the overall passenger experience.

Liezl Gericke, country manager for Virgin Atlantic in South Africa, agrees, explaining that Heathrow is massively constrained with capacity so travellers will benefit from the additional capacity at the airport.

Should the runway expansion take place, it will also mean more slots for airlines to fly to Heathrow, which

will give customers more choice, she says. "And more choices for travellers mean more opportunity to ensure that Heathrow remains the airport of choice for transiting passengers," Liezl says.

She admits the issue of funding remains contentious. "The debate is centred on who is going to pay for this expansion. Is it government? Airport taxes? Where will the money come from?"

Nonetheless, Liezl says Heathrow is still the number-one airport of choice for South Africans as it connects two source markets in the form of South Africa and Britain.



An artist's impression of Heathrow showing a third runway. Photo: Your Heathrow

"The Johannesburg-London route is the most popular route on the entire Virgin Atlantic route network in terms of passenger numbers," Liezl comments.

Plus, travellers know they can fly virtually anywhere in the world from

Heathrow, she adds. Eighty airlines fly into Heathrow, serving 183 destinations in 82 countries.

Corporates enjoy flying through Heathrow as well, says Liezl, because it is a trusted hub with a long legacy behind it.

Turkish ups flights, enhances schedule

TURKISH Airlines is increasing its frequencies on several routes this year.

- From June 28, flights between Istanbul and Bari, Italy, will increase from four weekly flights to five.
- From June 28, flights between Istanbul and Konya, Turkey, will

increase from 28 weekly flights to 30.

- From June 27, four weekly flights between Istanbul and Abu Dhabi will be launched.
- From October 31, flights between Istanbul and Durban will increase from four weekly flights to five.

- From November 5, Turkish will fly four times weekly from Istanbul to Durban via Johannesburg.
- From October 26, it will fly seven times weekly from Istanbul to Johannesburg.
- From October 26, it will fly seven times weekly from Istanbul to Cape Town.

Did you know?

Seventy-five million passengers travelled through Heathrow in 2015 - 205 400 a day - 51% arrivals and 49% departures. 93% (69,8m) were international passengers and only 7% (5,1m) were domestic. 64% (48m) were leisure while 36% (27m) were business travellers. The most popular destinations for travellers flying onward from Heathrow are (in descending order) New York, Dubai, Dublin, Amsterdam and Hong Kong. ■

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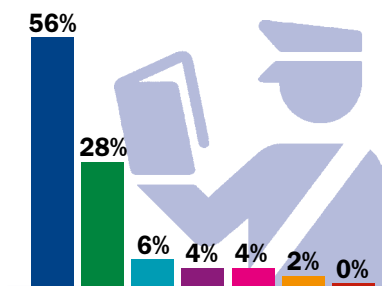
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Yee-haw!



Trafalgar is inviting all cowgirls, ranch hands, señoritas and travel agents to the launch events of its new North and Central Americas brochure. Each event will be themed and the tour operator dares all travel agents to dress up according to the theme. The launches will take place on July 5 in Johannesburg at the Hard Rock Café, Mandela Square; on July 6 in Cape Town at Hudsons The Burger Joint, Gardens; and on July 7 in Durban at Four15 Burrito District, Durban North. The Johannesburg and Cape Town events will have an American theme and the launch in Durban will have a Mexican theme. Seats are limited so giddy-up and rsvp to linda.chui@trafalgartours.com. Pictured here, saddled-up, are Trafalgar reservations consultants (back from left): **Michelle Langley** and **Petro Janse van Rensburg** and (front) **Leeanne Moses**. Photo: Shannon Van Zyl

SAA, Mango under investigation

From page 1
issued a 'clarification' in which it said it had indeed subleased a number of aircraft to Mango, the total cost to taxpayers of this arrangement, the terms of lease offered to Mango, and the total amount of losses to SAA attributed to the subleasing agreement.

A spokesperson for the Competition Commission told TNW that, following the DA's complaint, the Commission had launched an investigation. "In terms of the Competition Act, we have a year to complete the investigation," he said, adding that all would depend on the complexity of the case, as it might require the expertise of an economics analyst.

Competitors kulula.com and

FlySafair have welcomed the Commission's investigation.

FlySafair vp of sales and distribution, **Kirby Gordon**, says the investigation will no doubt lay to rest any uncertainty around this issue. "From the airline's perspective, we're inclined to allow the Commission the space they need to conduct their investigation into the matter, and we have faith the Commission will be able to implement corrective measures should any irregularities surface."

"Comair raised the concern that SAA would subsidise Mango when it was launched in 2006, but for the past eight years both SAA and Mango have defended the position that all interactions between SAA and Mango are on an arm's-length basis,"

says **Susan Van Der Ryst**, corporate communications manager of Comair and kulula.com. "We are happy to hear that the Competition Commission will launch an investigation into the dealings between SAA and Mango and will leave it to the authorities to manage and let the investigative process take its course."

Although SAA would not give any further comments besides its clarification statement, spokesperson for Mango, **Hein Kaiser**, told TNW: "While Mango has denied any subsidisation and its shareholder issued a clarification notice, Mango will co-operate fully with any queries or questions the Competition Commission may have vis-a-vis the matter." ■

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