



## **PRESS RELEASE**

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### **Travel Counsellors announces record sales start to the year**

Travel Counsellors has announced a record start to 2008 with sales of \$A61.8million in January, a 20% increase on last year. The past three weeks have seen sales up by over 28% and the company also achieved a first by reaching sales of over \$A2.2million on 20 consecutive week days.

The international home-based travel company, which launched in Australia seven months ago, now has over 880 Travel Counsellors operating across seven countries. In January these Counsellors each saw their commission rise by an average of 9% compared to last year.

Earnings have been boosted by a further growth in the use of the Company's dynamic packaging system, Phenix and the introduction of several global commercial deals for the benefit of Travel Counsellors in each of the seven countries that the company operates from. The Company has recently added a further range of wholesalers to the system as well as extending its own propriety hotel programme.

Over 70% of the Company's business is in tailor made travel with 50% of that being booked in Phenix. In January the average commission achieved by the company's Travel Counsellors booking accommodation through the system was 20%. Travel Counsellors in Australia are empowered to utilise the company's dynamic packaging technology to tailor make packages for their customers and enjoy increased commission as the company continues to gain global commercial buying power.

Managing Director Steve Byrne confirmed that sales for the first quarter 1 November 2007 to 31 January 2008 had increased by \$A19.8m or 20% on the prior year, in line with the company's projections. Passenger numbers were up by 7% from 48,870 to 52,397 passengers and average booking value was up by 9% to £1,831.

The company forecasts to increase turnover by \$A109m in 2008 to over \$A592m reaching over \$A734m in 2009. In 2007 the company's annual turnover increased by \$A88.3m or 21% from \$A413.7m to \$A502million.

Mr Byrne comments; "The success of our Travel Counsellors shows that there is a future for the best travel agents in having their own franchise as a Travel Counsellor. Our growth on a global basis is enabling our Travel Counsellors to share the benefits of international deals and share knowledge that will benefit them and their customers. There has never been a better time to become a Travel Counsellor."

**ENDS**



**About Travel Counsellors:** Travel Counsellors PLC is one of the UK's largest independent travel companies with turnover at the end of its last financial year (Oct 31 2007) of \$A502million, a 21% increase year on year. Founded in 1994 it currently has over 880 travel consultants who work from home with the support of over 170 staff at the company's head office in Bolton. The company operates in the UK, Ireland, the Netherlands, Germany, South Africa, Australia the US. In the UK Travel Counsellors places all customer money in a Trust account which guarantees a 100% refund in the event that a supplier collapses. Travel Counsellors was the winner of the prestigious Queen's Award for Enterprise in 2003-2008, the technology category of the 2005 CBI Growing Business Awards and was voted Travel Agent of the Year by readers of the Guardian, Observer and Guardian Unlimited in 2006 & 2007.

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