



### Today's issue of TD

*Travel Daily* today features six pages of news including our **Luxury** feature page, a full page from **Silversea** and a product page from **PlanPlay**.

### EY's summer sale

**ETIHAD** Airways has announced a limited-time offer for Aussies looking to book their next summer getaway.

Travellers can take advantage of up to 30% off ticket fares to select Etihad destinations, including Abu Dhabi, Paris and Amsterdam, with prices starting from \$1,669 for Economy and \$7,189 for Business.

Sweetening the deal, the carrier is also offering 40% discounted prices at one of Abu Dhabi's premium four-star and five-star hotels, or the option of a one- or two-night complimentary stay in a three- or four-star participating hotel, to coincide with the relaunch of Etihad Stopovers.

To find out more information on the promotion, see **HERE**.

## Bicton buys Claremont

**BICTON** Travel has announced the acquisition of Claremont Cruise & Travel Centre, marking its growth in the Perth market and a renewed focus on providing luxury and premium travel services.

The independent travel agency will complete the purchase in Jul 2023 from owner Lyn Murphy, who will continue to consult within the Perth business.

"I am thrilled for this new chapter for Bicton Travel," co-founder and Director Phil Smethurst said (pictured with Murphy and Bicton co-founder Carole Smethurst).

"This acquisition is a natural fit for us, and we're excited about the opportunities it presents to continue to offer a seamless and exceptional travel planning service to the clients of Claremont Cruise and Travel Centre."

Bringing 20 years of retail travel industry experience to the role, Gemma Smith has been



appointed Manager of the Perth agency, which will retain its current name and employees.

Claremont's clients can anticipate new travel offerings within the branch as a result of the acquisition, Smethurst said.

The purchase is the first in Bicton Travel's history, and follows its most profitable two months on record (**TD** 09 Mar), putting the company in its best financial position since its launch in 1998.

### Aussies paying more

**AUSSIERS** may be charged up to 64% more by making travel bookings through Australian websites, new research commissioned by cybersecurity company NordVPN has revealed.

The same deals on hotels and car hire are costing Australians hundreds of dollars more than overseas customers, according to the comparisons made using the company's Virtual Private Networks (VPNs), which disguise IP addresses.

In some cases, prices offered in different countries were similar, but significant savings were discovered across sites such as Hertz and Expedia.

### Silversea upgrades

**NOW** is the perfect time to book your clients on a Silversea cruise, with a two-category suite upgrade available on Ocean-going voyages and a one-category suite upgrade on Expedition cruises, plus a US\$1,000 shipboard credit per suite - see **p7** for more details on the shiny new offer.



## LAUNCHING PHONE SALES 1 MAY

### CHOOSE HOW YOU BOOK WITH US



PHONE SALES EXPERTS



ONLINE BOOKING PLATFORM - HELLO



24/7 SUPPORT

If you are not already registered to book with The Travel Junction, please click on the link below to register

**REGISTER NOW**

# "I love paying booking fees on train tickets"

- no one



## COOK ISLANDS FALL IN LOVE

**DIRECT FLIGHTS FROM SYDNEY**  
COMMENCING 29 JUNE 2023

**SAVE UP TO \$500 PER COUPLE**  
BOOK BY 30 APRIL 2023



## COOK ISLANDS



## UA boosts Aussie capacity

**UNITED** Airlines is touting its biggest-ever South Pacific network expansion (**TD** breaking news), as it prepares to add nearly 40% more flights from the US to Australia and New Zealand for the 2023 northern winter season.

The expansion will see UA become the largest carrier operating between Brisbane and the US, with the launch of three weekly LA-Brisbane flights from 29 Nov, as well as a move to daily flights on the San Francisco-Brisbane route beginning 28 Oct.

UA also announced the deployment of its largest aircraft to Melbourne from 28 Oct, providing nearly 100 additional seats daily to each departure via its Boeing 777-300ERs - up 65% compared to winter 2019.

Sydney will also see additional services, with UA set to fly to the city twice daily from San Francisco starting 28 Oct, offering more flights to Sydney from the

US than any other airline.

Meanwhile, the US carrier is also set to become the only airline to offer direct flights between the US and New Zealand's South Island, with the first nonstop San Francisco-Christchurch service flying three-times weekly on a Boeing 787-8 Dreamliner from 01 Dec.

Brisbane Airport Corporation CEO Gert-Jan de Graaff expects the new services to significantly boost tourism, with the ramp up in services to the city a "mind-blowing" boost to the area.

## Should we be able to travel anywhere?

A **NEW** opinion piece in the latest **travelBulletin** from Adam Bishop explores the moral tension that exists between travellers and countries with questionable human rights records - read the feature online **HERE**.

## Cultural South Korea

10 days including Jeju from only \$5,499\*

**mwtours**



LEARN MORE

## ACCC ticks QF/JQ

**THE** Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) has granted permission for Qantas and Jetstar Airways to continue coordination of two Jetstar Asian-based joint ventures and in certain circumstances, between Jetstar Japan and Japan Airlines for a period of five years.

Qantas and Jetstar sought permission to continue coordinating with each other and Jetstar's Asian joint ventures on matters such as flight scheduling, sales and marketing, and pricing.

Jetstar also sought to coordinate with its shareholding airlines including Qantas and JAL on passenger services within Asia, however the re-authorisation does not allow coordination between Qantas and JAL.

The ACCC said the extended coordination would likely result in consumers gaining access to a wider choice of products, enhanced services, and more convenient flight times.



## Window Seat

**FUR** babies now have the same rights as human children, under a new travel insurance policy for pets.

Southern Cross Travel Insurance (SCTI) has introduced a revised International Comprehensive policy, replacing its TravelCare policy, covering additional pet care at a kennel or cattery if pet owners' return travel is delayed.

The policy includes \$100 per day up to \$1,000 per paying person, while parents can also receive the same benefit for additional childcare expenses caused by delays.

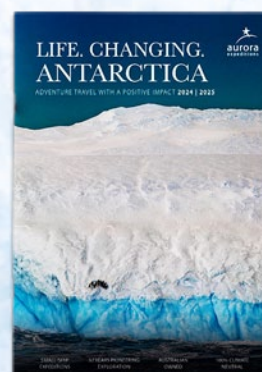
"Customers can now be reassured their babies of all breeds are now cared for," SCTI CEO Jo McCauley said.



# LIFE. CHANGING. ANTARCTICA

The Most Comprehensive Activity Program **2024 | 2025**

VIEW NEW BROCHURE



SMALL-SHIP EXPEDITIONS

32 YEARS PIONEERING EXPLORATION

AUSTRALIAN OWNED

100% CLIMATE NEUTRAL



Travel Daily  
LEARN MORE ABOUT  
SWITZERLAND WITH  
TRAVEL DAILY  
TRAINING ACADEMY

## Mexico still strong

**INTREPID** has confirmed that interest in travelling to Mexico from Aussies remains high, even though the country has endured several violent attacks on tourists in popular hubs like Cancun.

“We haven’t seen any impact on bookings for Mexico trips from Australian customers, with last month being our largest number of sales into Mexico product from Australia since the start of the pandemic,” Intrepid’s Regional General Manager of Latin America Gary Cohen told **TD**.

The operator also noted customers browsing Mexico trips is up 9% on 2019 figures, with Intrepid stating that all tours are at this stage running as per schedule, pending advice from the operator’s experts on the ground who are reviewing the situation on a daily basis.

“We design all our trips to avoid the more dangerous areas and our staff are trained to mitigate any risk,” Cohen added.

## Biggest incentive since ‘19

**INTREPID** has launched its Good Incentive, giving 15 agents a chance to win a trip in Europe, Morocco or the Middle East.

Heralded as the company’s biggest agent incentive since 2019, the latest push is designed to support Intrepid’s Good Trips Only campaign (**TD 14 Mar**) which rolled out across Australia and New Zealand last month to encourage small-group travel that connects with local communities.

“We really want our agents to be able to travel the Intrepid way; in a small group, with a local leader and getting to really experience the country as a local,” Intrepid GM of Sales and Partnerships ANZ Yvette Thompson said.

Agents can enter by watching the Good Trips Only webinar on Intrepid’s Agent Hub and then describe in 25 words or less what ‘Good Trips Only’ means to them in an email to [partners@intrepidtravel.com](mailto:partners@intrepidtravel.com).

[intrepidtravel.com](mailto:partners@intrepidtravel.com).

Each passenger booked and confirmed on an eligible trip during the incentive period will earn one entry into the draw.

The 12 top-selling agents will receive an Intrepid trip in Europe, Morocco or the Middle East, while an additional three agents will be randomly selected to win.

Closing 30 Apr, the Good Incentive is open to Australian and New Zealand-based agents registered to sell with Intrepid.

Prize winners will be contacted on 15 May 2023.

## VA listing on hold?

**VIRGIN** Australia’s owners Bain Capital have reportedly cancelled meetings scheduled with fund managers this week, fuelling speculation a mooted plan to launch an Initial Public Offering on the ASX has been put on ice for at least the first half of 2023.

## US need agents more

**THE** American Society of Travel Advisors (ASTA) has found half of American travellers are more likely to use a travel advisor than they were before the pandemic.

In a recent consumer research report released last week, ASTA found travel advisors “cut through the complexity” of modern travel, with a large majority of those surveyed agreeing planning a trip is now more complex than it has been previously.

The 50% of respondents who are more likely to use an agent is a 14% year-over-year increase, with the survey also finding Millennial and Generation Z consumers now consider travel their top discretionary purchase in 2023, as younger American travellers plan to fork out even more this year.

Almost half of respondents ranked a holiday as their top discretionary spend, with 17% more Americans than late last year to spend more on travel.



## FLY YOUR WAY

From the 3rd of March 2023, Fiji Airways will offer customers the option to customise how they travel based on their needs with four categories, **Lite, Value, Comfort, and Plus**.

All categories will include meals, beverages, inflight entertainment and a carry-on bag, with increasing value add-ons from Lite to Plus, such as checked baggage, ticket change and cancellation flexibility, seat selection and boarding priority.



VISIT [FIJIAIRWAYS.COM](http://FIJIAIRWAYS.COM)



## Bonza links Qld hubs

**BONZA** launched its very first flight between Toowoomba Wellcamp and Townsville Airport this morning.

The new route will operate twice weekly, and comes after the low-cost carrier launched its Melbourne to Toowoomba service earlier this week (**TD** 17 Apr).

“Why experience a really long drive or fly via a capital city when you can now fly direct with Bonza to explore North Queensland and Southern Queensland Country,” Bonza CEO Tim Jordan enthused.

Along with the Sunshine Coast and Rockhampton routes, which Townsville Airport GM Brendan Cook said have “proven to be very popular”, the Toowoomba service completes Bonza’s initial network for Townsville.

## China signs encouraging: TA

**EXCLUSIVE**

**PUSHING** back on media reports suggesting the flow of tourists from China is falling below forecasted expectations, Tourism Australia MD Phillipa Harrison insists that the fundamental life signs of the market are still on track.

While the TA chief conceded the latest international visitor arrival numbers showed the market is still well below where it was in 2019, the data demonstrates proof that there is a growing appetite for Chinese residents to holiday Down Under.

“For the month of Feb, we welcomed more than 40,000 travellers from China, this was up from less than 15,000 in Jan and shows Australia remains a top destination for Chinese travellers,” Harrison told **Travel Daily** this morning.

“Importantly, underlying

demand for Australia remains strong and according to the largest travel service provider in China, Ctrip, Australia is ranked as a top destination for Chinese travellers and we have marketing activity running to convert this.”  
When asked what time frames the Australian tourism market should expect China to return to its former glory by, Harrison stated “there is no doubt visitation levels will take time to bounce back”, but there were plenty of “encouraging signs” from China that should be helped along by gradually by improving aviation capacity.

One issue that could also be hampering the speed of recovery was China’s decision back in Jan to cut Australia from its Group Tour List, effectively removing Australia’s status as an approved destination for travel.

Despite this, Tourism Australia has been active in courting the country’s former number one market, with Harrison flying in personally at the start of Mar to meet with strategic partners (**TD** 01 Mar) on the eve of launching TA’s ‘Don’t Go Small, Go Australia’ campaign in China.

Pre-COVID, Australia welcomed 1.4 million visitors from China, contributing approximately \$12.4 billion in visitor spend.

## Anzac 2024 tours

**MAT** McLachlan Battlefield Tours has launched itineraries for Anzac Day in 2024.

The historic travel tour provider has released the packages of the memorial day with special commemorative tours of the Western Front, Gallipoli, Ypres and Hellfire-Pass in Thailand.

The founder, Mat McLachlan, anticipates battlefield travel will continue to boom in 2024 and beyond as “we saw a surge of bookings late last year and our team has been overwhelmed with bookings for 2023.

“All of our Anzac Day 2023 tours are fully booked and our later year tours are selling very strongly, with some of our feature tours,” he added.

Savings of up to \$400 per couple are available when booked prior to 30 Jun - book and view the itineraries of the Western Front tour **HERE**, Ypres tour **HERE**, Gallipoli tour **HERE**, and Hellfire Pass tour **HERE**.

## SIA bounces back

**SINGAPORE** Airlines Group (SIA) recovered to almost 80% of pre-COVID levels during Mar, with both SQ and Scoot carrying a combined 2.7 million passengers.

The result represented a 14.1% increase when compared to Feb, with budget carrier Scoot performing particularly well, carrying 940,000 passengers at a record load factor of 92.8%.

By the end of Mar, the group had covered 109 destinations across 36 countries, with SQ serving 74 of the destinations and Scoot handling the remainder.

## LUXURY TRAVEL

brought to you by  
TravelManagers

## The Rise and Rise of Luxury Travel



**MUCH** of the momentum behind the ongoing, post-pandemic recovery of the international

travel sector is being driven by an increase in demand from our customers for luxury travel experiences. The very definition of luxury travel is evolving and expanding to become a multifaceted approach that encompasses culture, cuisine, community, content and customisation: in other words, customers are looking for added value inclusions and bespoke experiences which go beyond our traditional expectations of luxury. TravelManagers’ responsibility to its personal travel managers (PTMs) is to ensure that they continue to have access to the best possible training, systems and product offerings so that they can deliver on their customers’ expectations. Our partnership with Signature Travel Network is one example of how we are accomplishing this: as their already-expansive collection of properties and suppliers continues to grow, so too will the opportunities for PTMs to demonstrate their value and expertise in the luxury travel sector.

**Troy Coelho – TravelManagers’ Operations Manager & Corporate Business Partnership Executive**



To find out more about joining our award-winning network visit [join.us@travelmanagers.com.au](mailto:join.us@travelmanagers.com.au)

**WILD Awaits**  
AATKings

WESTERN AUSTRALIA  
WALKING ON A DREAM

## Join us for a Kimberley Webinar

Join Tourism Western Australia & AAT Kings for a special event

**REGISTER NOW**

Friday 21 April  
1130 - 1200hrs  
AEDT

Wednesday 26 April  
1400 - 1430hrs  
AEDT

### Tauck adds six in Euro

**TAUCK** has introduced six new European river cruises for the 2024 season.

The new itineraries include a 12-day sailing from Munich to Budapest, and a 10-day journey between Amsterdam and Regensburg.

Also on offer is an 11-day voyage between Montreux and Brussels, an eight-day cruise between Brussels and Amsterdam, as well as a fortnight sailing between Cannes and Geneva.

The new luxury European additions are priced from \$6,800ppts, with packages covering all dining experiences, shore excursions, and drinks.

### Morrow joins Hilton

**JOANNE** Morrow has been appointed as Hilton's new Senior Manager, Luxury Sales, where she will oversee brands Waldorf Astoria, LXR and Conrad Hotels and Resorts in the Australian market.

Morrow has worked in the hotel segment for nearly 30 years, including two decades at Accor in senior roles such as Business Development Director, Luxury Sales Pacific, and most recently a three-year stint at McLaren Technologies as Hospitality and Events Technology Sales.

## BELMOND BREXIT MOVE

**BELMOND** has confirmed that next year's itineraries on the iconic Venice Simplon-Orient-Express (VSOP) rail journey will no longer include a UK leg, due to "enhanced passport and border controls" necessitated by Britain's exit from the European Union.

A spokesperson for the luxury brand said operations were being adjusted in 2024 to eliminate the historic British Pullman rail service from London's Victoria station to Folkestone, where they currently board coaches to cross the Channel to Paris where they link to the famed train.

"We want to avoid any risk of travel disruption for our guests - delays and missing train connections - and provide the highest level of service, as seamless and relaxed as possible,"



a Belmond spokesperson said.

Passengers wanting to join the VSOP from the UK will instead be encouraged to take the Eurostar from London to Paris.

Europe has announced plans to introduce the ETIAS electronic travel authorisation service, as well as new biometric scanners as part of the so-called Entry-Exit System (EES), applying to any external EU border crossings, including with the UK.

### New Plaza Premium Lounge opens at ADL

**TRAVELLERS** passing through Adelaide Airport can now relax at the luxurious new Plaza Premium Lounge in international departures, marking Plaza Premium Group's (PPG) first opening in South Australia's capital city.

As the only international lounge at the airport, the space can cater up to 137 passengers, and is decked out in natural stone, marble and granite, as well as award-winning local art.

The lounge features a wine



corridor, cocktail bar, dining area, work booths, and showers for guests to freshen up.

The venue will also introduce PPG's first specialty wine feature in collaboration with Accolade Wines later this month, showcasing award-winning Australian wines.

### Lux Esc goes Ultra

**LUXURY** Escapes has launched a new 'Ultra Lux' sub-brand, offering curated high-end hotels and tours along with 24/7 concierge service and complimentary home-to-airport transfers.

CEO Adam Schwab said the initiative reflected strong demand in the premium market, offering a hand-picked selection of the world's best properties alongside once-in-a-lifetime bucket list travel experiences, cruises and tours.

Launch partner brands include Regent Seven Seas Cruises, Ponant, Silversea, Abercrombie & Kent, COMO, One&Only, Six Senses, Mandarin Oriental and InterContinental.

### Versace walks away

**THE** House of Versace fashion brand has opted not to renew its branding agreement with luxury Gold Coast hotel, Palazzo Versace.

The property will undergo significant remodelling once the deal expires halfway through 2023, with many Versace figures needing to be removed, including thousands of Medusa tiles.

The refurbishment is expected to cost upwards of \$58 million, however all may be not lost, with several luxury hotel groups, including Hilton Worldwide, reportedly in talks to buy the Queensland property.

Join the Celebrations!

Celebrating

25  
YEARS IN

French Polynesia



\*Conditions apply

SPECIAL ANNIVERSARY OFFER - \$1,500 FLIGHT CREDIT PER PERSON\*

Paul Gauguin  
CRUISES

VIEW ITINERARIES



The Travel Daily Training Academy offers training modules starting at \$3500

For more information email: [training@traveldaily.com.au](mailto:training@traveldaily.com.au)



## ACCOMMODATION

**WELCOME** to Accommodation Updates, *Travel Daily's* Wed feature. If your property has undergone some recent changes you would like to make the industry aware of, send a brief description with an image to [accomupdates@traveldaily.com.au](mailto:accomupdates@traveldaily.com.au).



**Dorsett Melbourne** opened yesterday at 615 Little Lonsdale Street in the southern end of the CBD. The hotel comprises 316 guest rooms over eight levels, with pet-friendly and family rooms to suit all kinds of guests. The onsite restaurant, Port Bistro, offers daily breakfast and dinner on select evenings from May. The hotel's club lounge features an area for guests to work, dine and relax with complimentary services such as private check in available.



The new GPO restaurant situated in **InterContinental Wellington** is set to be opened by 21 Apr, with bookings available now. Combining a culinary story of travel, discovery, and culture, GPO offers a unique dining experience with local produce that draws influence from Southern Europe, Levant and the Mediterranean in the refined environment. The new restaurant also pays homage to the General Post Office that once occupied the same site.



New hillside pool villas and special offers are now available at the **Wyndaham Sundancer Resort Lombok** after three years of refurbishments on the resort's amenities. Located on the Indonesia city's southwest coast, the five-star resort now features one-, and two-bedroom suites, and seven new appointed hillside villas. The villas boast floor-to-ceiling windows, oversized bathtubs and generous living spaces, as well as private infinity pools.

## Fast road to Nancy

**AS PART** of the new Western Sydney Infrastructure Plan and future connection to the Western Sydney International (Nancy-Bird Walton) Airport, a new toll-free motorway is now underway to be opened in 2026.

The 16-kilometre M12 is a \$2 billion investment from the NSW Government to deliver enhanced connectivity via Elizabeth Drive & the Northern Road and will be available to residents prior to the opening of the airport.

## \$1 million grant for Indigenous tourism

**THE** Northern Territory Government has announced a \$1 million funding pool to boost its Indigenous tourism sector, marking the Aboriginal Tourism Grant Program's fifth round.

NT-based Aboriginal-owned businesses can apply for funding between \$30,000-\$100,000 to upgrade or develop new infrastructure or new products such as cultural experiences.

## Lunch & whisky in Tassie



**TOURISM** Tasmania CEO Sarah Clark recently visited the state's east coast to kick off the Tourism Tasmania Roadshow, as well as attend a lunch with the state's Tourism Minister and Premier, Jeremy Rockliff.

"Both were a great opportunity to speak with our many east coast tourism and hospitality operators," she enthused.

Clark then made an appearance at the official opening of the Waubs Harbour Whisky distillery, which she praised as "an amazing space in Bicheno and another top



quality boutique product coming out of Tasmania".

**Pictured inset:** Clark preparing to meet with key tourism partners during the roadshow.

## Holiday Inn Riyadh

**IHG** Hotels & Resorts has signed a new agreement with Riyadh-based Al Woroud Real Estate to introduce the Holiday Inn Express to the Saudi Arabia city.

As part of the Saudi Vision 2030 tourism plan, the collaboration will land the 200-key Holiday Inn Express Riyadh as the brand's first establishment in the Kingdom, demonstrating "next generation" designs situated in the capital's central Olaya district.

The resort will feature two meeting rooms equipped with advanced technology, a swimming pool and a gym, with a demographic focus on the emerging 'bleisure' market.

## Fighting fake news

**ALMOST** three-quarters, or 72%, of fake reviews were caught before ever being published on Tripadvisor in 2022, according to the company's new *Review Transparency Report*.

Only 4.4% of review submissions to the platform were identified as "fake" and removed, with 24,521 reviews associated with paid review companies also taken down from the platform, thanks to Tripadvisor's detection and moderation processes.

SUITE

UPGRADES

ENHANCE YOUR EXPERIENCE

## LIMITED-TIME OFFER

- CATEGORY UPGRADES
- US\$1,000 SHIPBOARD CREDIT
- 15% REDUCED DEPOSIT

Indulge your clients' wanderlust with a **two-category suite upgrade on Ocean-going voyages** – or a **one-category suite upgrade on Expedition cruises** – plus a **US\$1,000 shipboard credit** per suite\* and 15% reduced deposit on a global collection of itineraries departing October 2023 through May 2024. Our fleet of boutique, all-suite ships reveals the world's authentic beauty in true ultra-luxury splendour.

To take advantage of this limited-time offer, **book your clients' suite with our Door-to-Door All-Inclusive fares by 31 May, 2023.**

### OUR ALL-INCLUSIVE DOOR-TO-DOOR FARES INCLUDE:

- Private executive transfers (between home and airport)
- Economy Class Air/Business Class upgrades at reduced rates or Air Credit
- Shore excursions (one per port, per day)
- Butler service in every suite category
- Premium beverages in-suite and throughout the ship
- Multiple restaurants serving diverse cuisine and an in-suite 24-hour dining service, including caviar
- Unlimited Wi-Fi
- Onboard gratuities

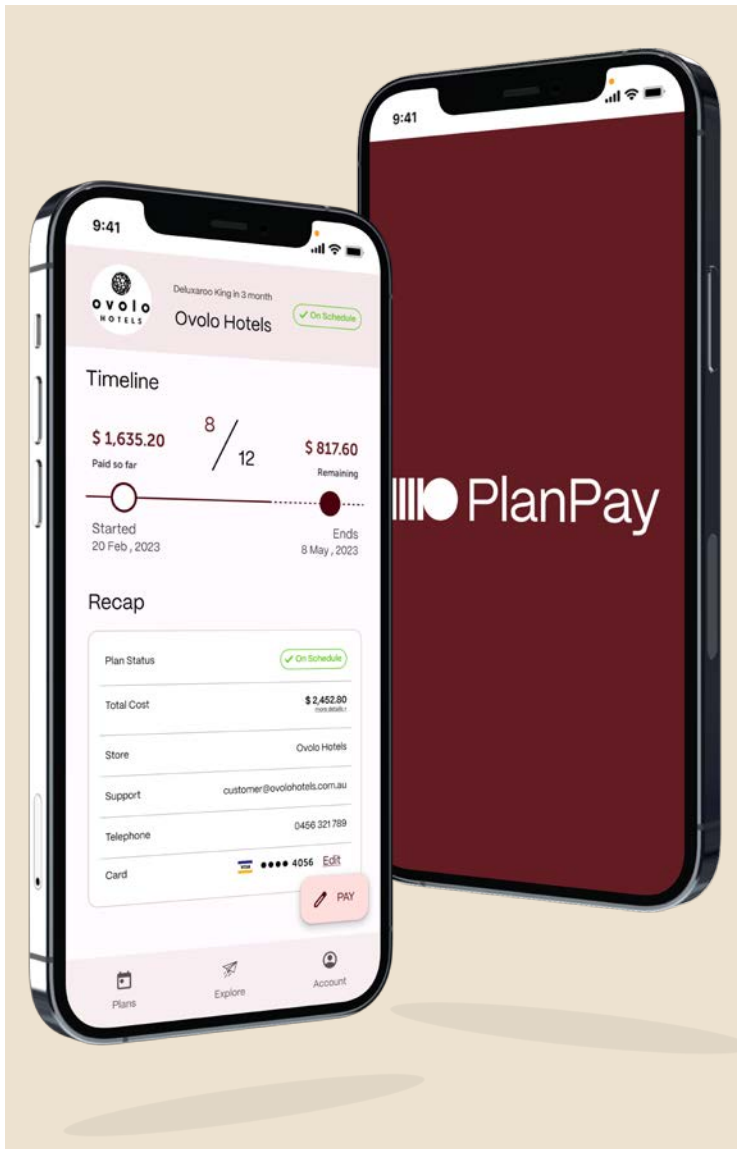


Learn more about this offer



Place your camera in front of the QR Code and follow the link.  
For some smartphones a QR Reader would be needed.

**CONTACT YOUR SILVERSEA SALES MANAGER OR RESERVATIONS  
ON 1300 306 872 OR +61 2 9255 0600 | SILVERSEA.COM/TRADE**



# PlanPay: NEW Digital Layby Option

A new payment option has entered the market, offering a digital lay-by platform to make it easier to budget for travel. At a time when the rising cost of living is making it tough for Aussies to budget for their holidays, PlanPay allows guests to pay before they stay in flexible instalments that suit their lifestyle – all with zero credit, zero fees, and zero worries.

PlanPay is the smart way for travellers to pre-pay their experiences in instalments and

lock in their travel up to two years in advance, using their own money rather than credit..

Offering game-changing flexibility, customers can tailor their Plan into weekly, fortnightly, or monthly payments so they're all paid up before their trip.

For merchants, PlanPay can increase your direct bookings and lead times, as well as seamlessly integrating into your backend systems and avoiding any extra work for your team. The PlanPay checkout integration was

seamlessly enabled to maximise a hotel's direct bookings and increase web conversion.

## SAY HELLO TO PLANPAY

Chat to the PlanPay team to find out how you can offer the new digital layby option to your customers at checkout and increase your direct bookings.



Phone: 1800 780 880  
Website: [www.planpay.com](http://www.planpay.com)

