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Duration 14 Days

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Voyage SM231108014

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## Auckland to Sydney

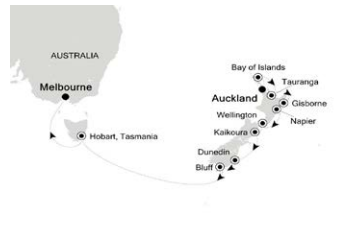
Departure Dec 7, 2023  
Duration 14 Days

*Silver Muse*  
Voyage SM231207014

### PORTS

Auckland - Auckland - Bay of Islands - Tauranga - Gisborne - Napier - Wellington - Kaikoura - Dunedin (Port Chalmers) - Bluff - Cruising Milford Sound - Day at sea - Day at sea - Sydney - Sydney

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### Today's issue of TD

*Travel Daily* today features six pages of the latest news including **Business Events News**, plus a front cover wrap from **Silversea** and a full page from **The Travel Junction**.

### New Avis chief

**KURT** Knackstedt has been appointed as Head of Sales - Pacific at Avis Budget Group.

Knackstedt is well known to the industry having co-founded Troovo, a startup travel tech firm ultimately acquired by Spanish firm Voxel Group in 2021.

He was also President of the Association of Corporate Travel Executives (ACTE) and has held roles at HRS Group, Rio Tinto, Amex GBT and Traveport.

Knackstedt's appointment will bolster Avis Budget Group Pacific's commercial team which is led by Justin Montgomery, who joined the business last year after senior roles at Amadeus and Virgin Australia.

More appointments on [page 6](#).

### New WA package

**THE** Travel Junction's new partnership with Western Australia (**TD** yesterday) has seen the specialist wholesaler create a range of unique packages, including an eight-day self-drive deal leading in at \$1,749ppts.

The Cape-to-Cape Indulgence deal takes guests from Perth to Augusta and Margaret River - see the [last page](#) for details.

## itravel renews CVFR deal

### EXCLUSIVE

**ITRAVEL** has re-signed its ticketing agreement with CVFR Consolidation, with the relationship established in 2019 having "grown from strength to strength post-COVID".

CVFR Travel Group CEO Ram Chhabra said the ongoing partnership is based on mutual respect and similar aspirations.

"Our values are aligned and we both strongly believe in always putting the agent first," he said.

Steve Labroski, itravel CEO said the synergy with CVFR is built around each party's individual independence.

"We're not locked into any big consortia, so our agents are our primary focus," he said.

Labroski said the group has seen triple-digit growth in the last two years across its various business models which support mobile agents, franchise stores, linked affiliates and the newly launched LUXE by itravel, which is partnered with Virtuoso.

"We have seen demand grow from travel agents that want to be as independent as we are, and we've catered to this," he said.

### QR "robust" 22/23

**QATAR** Airways has released its annual report for 2022/23, with a net profit of US\$1.21 billion on overall revenue of US\$21 billion - a 45% increase on the prior year.

Passenger revenue doubled on a 31% capacity increase, driven by a group-wide load factor of 80% and surging yields which were up almost 10%.

QR carried 31.7 million passengers, up 71%, including 1.4 million travellers who visited Qatar for the FIFA World Cup.

The carrier's global network grew to over 160 destinations, and a new expansion of QR's Hamad International Airport home base in Doha will see its annual capacity rise to 70 million passengers.

### JAL clothing rental

**TRAVELLERS** to Japan may be able to pack somewhat lighter after Japan Airlines announced a new partnership with Sumitomo Corporation to offer the ability to rent leisure and business clothing.

The Any Wear, Anywhere clothes rental service launched this week, with prospective users required to submit details a month prior to arrival detailing their flight, duration of stay and preferred clothing size.

Clothes will be delivered to Tokyo Hotels, with *Nikkei Asia* suggesting the service may also be extended to other member carriers in the Oneworld alliance.

JAL said that as well as making travel more convenient, the initiative will help reduce its carbon footprint and contribute to fashion sustainability - see [anywearanywhere.store](#).

### Silversea sails ANZ

**SILVERSEA** Cruises is today showcasing close-to-home itineraries over the 2023/24 season aboard *Silver Muse*, with fares featuring wi-fi for every guest, shore excursions, gratuities & more - see the [cover page](#).

Wendy Wu Tours

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## TNZ trade survey

**TOURISM** New Zealand has launched a Winter Trade Survey, seeking feedback from travel sellers on how the organisation can best support them in selling NZ and in particular winter travel experiences.

The survey is now open and will close at 5pm on 14 Jul - to take part simply [CLICK HERE](#).

## Rome EDITION

**EDITION** Hotels has opened a new property in Rome's Via Veneto, with 91 rooms along with a rooftop lounge, bar and pool, urban wellness space and more - [editionhotels.com/rome](https://editionhotels.com/rome).

## Ponant announces its 14th ship

**PONANT** overnight unveiled plans for a revolutionary new vessel dubbed *Swap2Zero* which incorporates six key technologies in a bid to eliminate emissions.

With a unique sail power system and extensive solar cells, the ship will also incorporate a liquid hydrogen fuel cell and on-board carbon capture technology.

The cruise line is now seeking bids from shipyards to build the vessel which will have about 100 staterooms, with an anticipated launch by 2030.

More on the groundbreaking move in today's *Cruise Weekly*.

## Stuba adds new filters

**ACCOMMODATION** specialist Stuba has revamped its website to include two new search functionalities in a bid to make the lives of travel agents selling hotel stays easier.

The first new curation is a 'Trade Deals' search, showing travel sellers where there are bigger pricing gaps compared to online public rates.

"[The new feature] will save the agent time having to do their own research and the customer will have the reassurance of getting a preferential rate and booking via a travel agent," Stuba said.

Meanwhile the company has also introduced a 'Boutique' hotels curation, allowing travel agents to more easily find alternative options to larger hotels and chains, servicing

a growing number of clients who are looking for unique accommodation experiences.

"Our latest curations are both designed to make our partners' lives easier, boutique hotels are incredibly popular, so to have a curation that highlights them is fantastic," CEO Ruchir Bang said.

"Some of the hotels within the collection are also offering value-added offers, which are also easy to find.

"[Meanwhile] Trade Deals is giving power back to the agent so that they can be confident that they are offering a price difference over and above online public rates - a win-win for them and their customers," he added.

More details [HERE](#).

## JQ Bali packages

**JETSTAR** has announced the return of its Bali Breaks Holiday Packages Sale, with prices starting from \$442 per person.

The cheapest package includes return flights from Darwin and four nights' accommodation at Four Points by Sheraton Kuta.

Travellers from Sydney can enjoy five nights at Hotel Vila Lumburg from \$632pp, while those flying from Brisby can opt for the five-night package at Bali Dynasty Resort, priced from \$790pp.

There are also packages from Melbourne and Perth.

The sale ends 12 Jul, with travel dates including Sep-Dec 2023 and Jan-Mar 2024 - [CLICK HERE](#).

## Whales and trails

**CORAL** Expeditions has launched a brand-new itinerary exploring the coastline of Southwest Australia in spring 2024.

*Coral Adventurer* will sail the 10-night voyage following the migratory trail of the Humpback, Southern Right and Blue whales, giving guests a chance to glimpse the magnificent creatures as they nurse their calves.


Cruisers will also enjoy shore excursions each day exploring diverse trails, like sections of the iconic Cape to Cape coastal walk.

Prices starting from \$9,200pp - [CLICK HERE](#) to book.




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## AFTA hosts Press Club event



**YESTERDAY** the Australian Federation of Travel Agents (AFTA) hosted travel industry guests and other stakeholders at a landmark National Press Club of Australia address in Canberra by Linda Burney, Minister for Indigenous Australians.

**Pictured** back row from left are Fiona Cornforth from the Healing

Foundation; Jessica Bulger from the Australian Indigenous Governance Institute; Corporate Traveller's Jaya Goodfellow; and Ehsan Karim from Airservices Australia.

Front row: AFTA CEO Dean Long with Paul Logan from Airservices Australia and Craig Ripley of Corporate Travel Management.

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## Bruce Poon Tip OC

**G ADVENTURES** founder Bruce Poon Tip has been recognised for his services to humanity with an Officer of the Order of Canada title, which he said was "the most humbling honour", and follows another recent gong (**TD** 22 Jun).

## US China warning

**THE** US Government has issued a new travel advisory suggesting American citizens should reconsider travel to China due to the risk of wrongful detention.

Just the latest chapter in rising tensions between the two superpowers, the travel advice represents an increase from "exercise increased caution" to "reconsider your need to travel", an advisory which also applies to American travel to Hong Kong, as well as the Chinese mainland.

The heightened advice arrives despite a recent trip to Beijing by Secretary of State Antony Blinken to dial down tensions.



## Window Seat

**AUTHORITIES** in France have issued a fine against the country's rail operator SNCF, finding the company negligent after a train ran over a pet cat.

A French court agreed with the owners of Neko, who accused rail staff of cruelty because they refused to delay the departure of a high speed service from Paris to Bordeaux in Jan this year after the feline jumped onto the tracks.

The death of the cherished creature sparked demonstrations and an online petition which attracted over 100,000 signatures.

Although the charge attracts a maximum €75,000 fine and a five-year prison sentence, the court ruled the killing was involuntary and imposed penalties totalling just €3,000.



**SYD OR BNE TO NOUMEA FROM \$589 RETURN\***

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## Sail Europe in 2024

**TRAVELMARVEL** has revealed more details about its 2024 Europe program, offering travellers 25 itineraries to choose from, ranging from eight to 28 days in length.

The new collection features the brand's latest ship, *MS Estrela (TD 04 Jul)*, servicing trips including the eight-day Douro Discovery voyage, which starts in Porto and includes 11 villages and cities.

Also new for 2024 is a jointly run itinerary with Hurtigruten, offering a 10-day Norwegian Coastal Express journey which begins with stays in Oslo and Kirkenes before traversing the Norwegian coastline - all led by a Travelmarvel tour leader.

Popular trips also return, such as the 15-day European Gems from Amsterdam to Budapest sailing, exploring the historic towns of Rudesheim, Wurzburg, Bamberg and Nuremberg, and starting from \$6,245ppts. Call 1300 205 408 for details.

## New Noosa chief



**TOURISM** Noosa has appointed Sharon Raguse (**pictured**) as its new CEO, taking on the role next month from Susan Ewington who has been acting in the role since the middle of last year.

Raguse's career has included senior roles with Brisbane Marketing, Tourism & Events Qld and Falls Creek, and she said she was "delighted to be coming home to one of Australia's premier tourism destinations".

## AirCalin AF pact

**AIRCALIN** has expanded its codeshare partnership with Air France, with the SB code now seen on AF's Paris-Singapore flights.

## RAKxa special deal

**UPGRADES** and bonus holistic wellness sessions are on offer for stays at RAKxa Wellness & Medical Retreat in Thailand under a special deal for stays by 31 Oct.

An additional complimentary treatment is on offer for every three-night stay, while stays of a minimum five nights will be upgraded to a Pool Villa, subject to availability.

For more information, rates and bookings contact Manon Burrer via [manon@uniquetourism.com](mailto:manon@uniquetourism.com).

## Melbourne hotel sale

**CBRE** Hotels has announced the successful sale of the Novotel and Ibis Melbourne Central Hotel for \$170 million.

The 472-room property was built in 2018 as Australia's first dual-branded high-rise hotel, with the purchaser in Melbourne's biggest hotel transaction in the last six years named as Singapore's Worldwide Hotels Group.

## Sabre tech purchase

**SABRE** has swooped on hospitality e-commerce provider Techsembly, purchasing the business for an undisclosed sum.

The newly-acquired company offers a fully automated solution that enables hotels to manage multiple online property stores, products, and logistics - all within the one centralised platform.

In addition to its marketplace, a big part of Techsembly's value is offering configurable capabilities to help sell gift cards for hoteliers.

Techsembly's capabilities will now be integrated with Sabre Hospitality's SynXis Retail Studio, which already offers hotel clients an unlimited number of products and services alongside room reservations.

"Not only will this acquisition accelerate our product roadmap, but it also enables us to come together and offer the most robust and effective suite of integrated retailing solutions," Sabre President Scott Wilson said.

## SEMESTER 2 - DESTINATION AMERICAS

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## Vic's Mega May

**BUSINESS** events injected a \$148 million boost to Victoria's economy in May, after a "mega" month of events, including 46 held at the Melbourne Convention Bureau, which saw 61,375 hotel room nights generated.

The sector's boom is expected to continue, with 147 international and national confirmed business events in the pipeline between now and 2028.

The planned events are expected to deliver more than \$821 million to the state's economy.

May was also a record-breaking month for the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre (MCEC), which hosted more than 76 events, including the Rotary International Convention, which alone attracted over 14,000 international delegates to the city.

## TECH IS "EXTREMELY CONCERNING"

**FACIAL** recognition technology (FRT) is being used at a number of major stadiums in Australia without the knowledge or consent of event-goers, a new investigation from CHOICE has revealed.

The advanced technology uses cameras to collect the unique 'faceprint' of someone, which is classed as "sensitive data" under privacy legislation.

After analysing the privacy policies and conditions of entry statements of 10 stadiums and stadium operators across the country, CHOICE found that nearly half permit facial recognition use without specifying where and how the tech is being used.

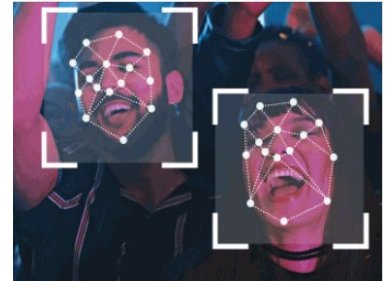
Several major sporting stadiums, including the Sydney and Melbourne Cricket Grounds and Allianz Stadium, state in their conditions of entry that FRT is in use, however, CHOICE said the operators were "vague or non-responsive" when contacted with a request for more information.

CHOICE Consumer Data Advocate Kate Bower said the findings are "extremely concerning", flagging Qudos Bank Arena's use of the tech as particularly worrisome.

Despite the Sydney venue saying it alerts attendees to the use of FRT through digital signage and its conditions of entry, CHOICE argues that not only are the signs difficult to find and take more than 10 minutes to read, they also don't mention how the information is stored, shared or used.

"This leaves the door open for harmful selling and sharing of sensitive biometric information," Bower said, highlighting the "massive" amount of data that could potentially be collected, stored and shared by the venue this year alone, with a number of huge events on Qudos' calendar this year, including Lizzo, Sam Smith and Disney on Ice.

The venue's parent company, ASM Global, which also operates



Suncorp Stadium in Brisbane and convention centres around the country, says on its website that it has the right to collect "biometric data" including "images from facial recognition systems operated at Venues (if any)".

CHOICE is urgently calling for tighter regulation of FRT and clear guidelines to hold businesses accountable when they are using the controversial technology.

"People should have the choice to opt in or out...[but] any details regarding the use of this technology are usually buried deep in a privacy policy or conditions of entry," Bower said.

## NZ Biz Events Week

**NEW** Zealand's business events sector will be placed under the spotlight in Sep, with the dates for the Business Events Industry Aotearoa (BEIA)'s inaugural Business Events Week to run from 18-22 Sep.

The week will kick off in Marlborough with BEIA's annual conference, before heading to Wellington for a policy forum then Auckland for the Tourism NZ Business Events National Awards.

## Whitsundays MICE

**THE** Whitsundays is showcasing its MICE appeal with the release of a Business Events Compendium.

The 31-page guide showcases the Queensland destination's business events offerings, including team-building activities, resorts, dining options, venues and more - see it [HERE](#).

## WSSC open soon

**THE** Western Sydney Conference Centre (WSSC) is set to open in Aug, two months earlier than anticipated, adjoining the new Pullman Sydney Penrith.

One of the biggest conference centre's outside of the Sydney CBD, WSSC will cater to 1,000 guests with over 1,250m<sup>2</sup> of event space.

## Mining Congress

**MORE** than 3,500 delegates from 70 countries gathered in Brisbane last week for the International World Mining Congress, marking the first time the event has been held Down Under.

PCO ICMS Australasia secured the event in 2016, achieving record global participation and sponsorship.

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In a mission to lessen the destruction to Australia's wildlife and their habitats, **Wild Australian Sanctuaries (WAS)** has appointed **Chris Waite** as one of its board members. Waite is currently the Head of Corporate Affairs, JAPAC at IHG Hotels & Resorts and will work closely with other board members to achieve sustainability goals.

Bringing 30 years of safety and risk management experience, **Darren Evans** has been appointed to the newly created executive position of Chief Safety & Risk Officer at **Auckland Airport**, effective from Nov. Evans will focus on identification, management and assurance of the hub's safety and risk management remit. He is currently the General Manager in Safety & Medical at Air New Zealand.

**Softel Melbourne On Collins** has appointed **Rachael Harman** to the position of General Manager, effective from 24 Jul. She succeeds the retiring Clive Scott. Harman has over 20 years of experience in senior management roles across Australia, New Zealand, Malaysia and Singapore, and will transition from a similar role at Softel Adelaide.

**Mai Vu** has taken on the role of Sales Manager, MICE at **Park Hyatt Melbourne** after a stint with ANDAZ Singapore in a similar role. Vu brings over 10 years of experience that will help strengthen relationships with key MICE clients. She will also be responsible for organising campaigns and events in her new position.

**Kellie Stanbury's** role as National Business Manager at **Helloworld Business Travel** is being expanded to include responsibility for the Magellan Travel network. Under the new structure, additional roles are being recruited including a Network Coordinator and a Communications and Product Manager.

After almost a six-year stint at BORON, the industry veteran **Stephan Baars** has returned to **BCD Travel** as its President and CEO. Baars returns with a vision to build the company's success. He will steer the travel management company's operation with pillars revolving around trust, innovation and sustainability.

Travel industry business specialist, **Sue Lim**, has begun her position of Business Development Manager in National Corporate Sales at **Virgin Australia**. Based in the airline's Melbourne office, Lim's extensive experience consists of stakeholder engagement, strategic planning, negotiation, and more. She has also worked with Qantas and Air New Zealand in similar senior roles.

**G'Day Group** has announced **David Hassan** as the group's new Chief Technology Officer. Hassan brings over 30 years of related experience and is based in the group's Sydney office. He will work closely with the newly appointed Chief Financial Officer, Karen Jarrett, to provide technology solutions to its brands.

### EDITORIAL

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## Tassie travels to woo China



**TOURISM** Tasmania (TT) Chief Executive Sarah Clark touched down in China last week to participate in Tourism Australia's China Mission, a series of events welcoming Chinese travellers back to Australia (**TD 26 Jun**).

Alongside a delegation of state tourism organisation leaders, Clark visited Guangzhou, Shanghai and Chengdu, where she met with a range of key travel distribution partners, OTAs, social media platforms, airlines and Chinese media.

She also met with TT's in-market representative in China and key

stakeholders for Tasmania.

The Tassie DMO will undertake a series of activities to help drive demand from the Chinese market, including collaborating with Tourism Australia across multiple programs.

Tasmania's Chinese visitation for the Mar 2023 quarter was 25% of the equivalent pre-COVID period.

Before the pandemic, Chinese visitors comprised around 15% of the state's total international visitors, and injected around \$163 million in expenditure per year.

**Pictured:** 'Team Australia' gives China a thumbs-up.

## The Chat

with Jenny



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