

## TTC appoints Tammy

**TAMMY** Van Exan has taken a new role as National Groups Sales Manager Oceania at The Travel Corporation (TTC).

Formerly with Insight & AAT Kings, Van Exan returns to TTC from her most recent role at APT Travel Group - more appts on **p7**.

## HLO to buy ETG for \$70m

**HELLOWORLD'S** \$70 million acquisition of competitor Express Travel Group (**TD** breaking news) will bring the current arch-rivals together, with ETG owner Tom Manwaring to remain as CEO of the business once it becomes a subsidiary of HLO.

Manwaring, who has owned the business alongside Spiros Alysandratos, took over the company in 2003 and has built it into a significant force in the Australian and New Zealand travel industry.

Brands being acquired as part of the deal include Express Tickets, Independent Travel Group, Select Travel Group, italktravel & cruise, Alatus and cruise wholesaler Creative Cruising.

Across the Tasman, NZ-based First Travel Group, YOU Travel and Lifestyle Holidays are also part of the momentous deal.

An ASX announcement this morning confirmed the 100% purchase would be an as-yet-unspecified mixture of cash and HLO shares, with the \$70 million price tag representing a multiple of "approximately seven times forecast normalised earnings for ETG in FY23 of \$10-\$11 million".

The Alysandratos family's Sintack Pty Ltd already owns 13.31% of Helloworld, and because it's therefore a related party the transaction will require shareholder approval at a specially convened Extraordinary General Meeting which has been scheduled for Fri 21 Jul.

Helloworld CEO, Andrew Burnes, said "we are delighted to announce our forthcoming acquisition of ETG".

"They have been one of the most successful travel operations in Australia and NZ in the ticketing, retail network and distribution sectors, and we look forward to the continued growth of the business under Tom's leadership and vision," he said.

Subject to approval by shareholders, the deal is expected to settle in early Aug - just before the upcoming Express Travel Group conference is scheduled to take place in Singapore.

It's unclear at this stage whether ACCC clearance will be required for the acquisition, which is likely to significantly lessen competition in the travel agency franchise market in Australia.

The Alysandratos family is also the owner of Consolidated Travel. HLO shares dipped 5c to \$2.59 in the wake of the announcement.

## Today's issue of TD

*Travel Daily* today features seven pages of news including **Business Events News** and a photo page from **Ponant**, plus a full page from **Tourism Australia**.

## AQV to sell ships

**AMERICAN** Queen Voyages (AQV) has announced that it will focus exclusively on river cruises, with the strategic shift seeing it exit the Great Lakes next year and sell the *Ocean Voyager* and *Ocean Navigator* vessels which it operates in the region.

The Journey Beyond sister brand will also operate a revised river schedule using its *American Queen*, *American Countess* and *American Empress*, while the update didn't mention AQV's fourth river vessel, the *American Duchess*.

AQV is part of Hornblower's "overnight division" led by Journey Beyond Chief Executive Officer Chris Tallent.

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## FCTG's new leisure model

**FLIGHT** Centre Travel Group (FCTG) yesterday detailed a “transformed operating model”, with Global Head of Leisure, James Kavanagh noting a “new world” focus on less bricks and mortar shops - but each of them much more productive.

The “scalable, efficient operating model” is delivering a 90% increase in productivity per consultant, he said.

The “old world” for FCTG had about 1,500 shops each selling about \$7 million annually, while post-COVID that has settled at 543 outlets each producing \$13m.

Kavanagh reaffirmed FCTG's overall FY23 targets of up to \$290 million in underlying profit (**TD** breaking news) - a turnaround from last year's \$183m loss.

He said FCTG Leisure had emerged from the pandemic with a “more productive, more efficient and more diverse business, with famous brands, enhanced

capability and winning models”.

The evolution will see a shift of TTV from employee-based models to an increasing proportion of independent-based models which are forecast to grow from just 3% of TTV pre-pandemic to 18% next year.

The firm is also seeing online TTV increase from \$1.3 billion pre-COVID to \$1.6 billion this year.

Alongside the core Flight Centre brand, the burgeoning FCTG Luxury Travel Collection will boost margins, while Flight Centre Independent now comprises 1,434 members producing about 15% of Leisure TTV.

The Independent division has a “strong plan to drive growth in the large North American market”, while Kavanagh also noted the continuing growth of the invitation-only Link Travel Group founded by Flight Centre, Spencer Travel & Goldman Group.

More from FCTG on **page three**.

## FCTG extras push

**SALE** of ancillary products are part of Flight Centre Travel Group's proactive strategies to grow revenue, with a focus on increasing add-on sales across all brands, according to FCTG Leisure Chief Executive Office James Kavanagh.

Almost 70% of Flight Centre brand bookings now include a Captain's Pack offering features such as change fee waivers, lost baggage tracking and travel insurance discounts, and nearly one in three bookings are also attaching insurance.

Travel Associates' “concierge fee” is generating about 1% in additional margins, while in New Zealand, a Travel Expert Fee is also helping contribute to the bottom line.

Traditional margins are being maintained in land, tours and cruise, while “air margins are expected to increase from current levels as competition and capacity normalise,” the firm said.

## Come & say g'day!

**COME** and say g'day and become an expert in all things Australian with Tourism Australia's Aussie Specialist Program - more info on **page 8**.

## Cashless in China

**MASTERCARD** and Alipay are offering Australian travellers a new cashless payments option when taking a trip to China.

Mastercard holders can now link their credit or debit cards to the Alipay digital wallet to safely and conveniently pay for transactions while visiting China.

The announcement expands on a partnership established in 2019 to offer enhanced digital payment solutions travellers while in China (**TD** 08 Nov 2019).

“We strive to enable more consumers and SMEs to enjoy the benefits brought by inclusive digital payments,” said Venetia Lee, GM Greater China Int'l Business for Alipay parent Ant.

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## Window seat

**DELEGATES** at this week's International Luxury Travel Market (ILTM) in Singapore have been feted with all manner of promotional material and will be leaving for home with bags stuffed with luggage tags, sweet treats, passport wallets, novelty USB drives and more.

One of the most intriguing items on offer is on the Trump Hotels stand, and while visitors to the show may not be exactly on board with the former President's politics, they have definitely been attracted by the undeniable appeal of these chocolate gold ingots - hard to resist for many of the ILTM attendees.



## Influential Intrepid

**INTREPID** Travel was overnight named one of the world's 100 most influential companies by *TIME Magazine*, which noted that "business is booming for the certified B Corp".

CEO James Thornton said the honour was a testament to the power of travel to transform the world and create more resilient communities.

"This proves that our style of locally-led small-group adventures is no longer 'niche'... our way of travelling is actually helping to shape the future of travel," Thornton said.

The list was compiled via nominations from *TIME's* global network of contributors and correspondents.

## Travel still "top of mind"

**ALMOST** 90% of Australian travellers intend to holiday internationally within the next 12 months, according to the bullish results of a survey of Flight Centre leisure brand customers.

Detailed during a presentation from James Kavanagh (see **p2**), other key travel intentions include having multiple holidays planned and a preference for stays longer than one week.

Eighty three percent of int'l travellers intend to spend the same or more on their next overseas trip, with 15% to spend "significantly more", he said.

The top travel motivations continued to be visiting friends and relatives, cited by 29%, while 24% want to relax and recharge and 21% want to fulfil something on their bucket list.

Kavanagh also indicated changes in destination preferences, with ticket sales to the UK replacing the USA in the top spot.

The UK now comprises 13.9% of FCTG international flight

## QF rebukes ranking

**QANTAS** has responded to its poor showing at the Skytrax Awards this week, which saw the carrier slip down to 17th spot, well behind Singapore Airlines which was crowned the best airline in the world (**TD** 21 Jun).

Speaking with **TD** this morning, a spokesperson for the airline said the survey took place nine months ago "when it was clear our service wasn't back to our best", adding that "a lot has changed since and if you ran this survey today, the results would be very different".

Qantas pointed to the fact that it has claimed the mantle as the most punctual major domestic airline for the past nine months in a row, while its mishandled baggage rate has also improved to 18% below pre-COVID levels.

Virgin Australia fared even worse in the Skytrax Awards, dropping to 46th spot on the list.

bookings, up from 10.5% in 2019.

US flights are in second spot with an 8.4% share, down from 10.6% pre-pandemic, while NZ is in third spot followed by Fiji, Italy, Indonesia, Thailand, Japan, France and Greece.

The average age of customers is decreasing slightly, the global leisure chief also noted, with the typical Flight Centre brand client now aged 55, while Travel Associates attracts a slightly older demographic at age 60, versus recent acquisition Scott Dunn which reports a 51-year-old average client age.

## Millions of FCTG customers

**FLIGHT** Centre Travel Group has a total customer base of 28 million, with James Kavanagh, Global Head of Leisure, yesterday detailing some of the segmentation of the database.

The core Flight Centre brand has a list of 15 million customers, while the database for Travel Associates comprises about 913,000 clients and newly acquired Scott Dunn's database has 472,000 customers.

The premium brands report a strong repeat level of 70% for Travel Associates and 65% for Scott Dunn, while Flight Centre brand clients repeat at a rate of 51% on average, Kavanagh said.

The average booking size for the Flight Centre brand is \$3,300, compared to \$13,800 for Travel Associates and a whopping \$45,000 for Scott Dunn.

## Digital reach for FC

**FLIGHT** Centre brand is now offering an enhanced online user experience via a single globalised website and app, offering holiday "omni-product" via both online and offline channels.

The digital platform also uses "Artificial Intelligence-driven product placement" to drive cross-sell opportunities.

## All about margins

**FLIGHT** Centre Travel Group is targeting a 2% net profit before tax margin within its leisure businesses, according to the division's head James Kavanagh.

Leisure brands currently aiming for a net margin above 2% include Flight Centre brand, Travel Associates, Scott Dunn, Ignite Travel Group, the company's wholly owned Liberty Travel stores in the USA and the Travel Academy operations.

Brands at 2% or below include Independents, Flight Centre Online, Travel Money, Jetmax and Student Universe.

Travel industry specialist analyst, John O'Shea, yesterday noted that "other things being equal, every 1% change in the revenue margin results in a \$150 million impact on net profit before tax".

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## AFTA: IATA is not enough

**THE** newly constituted Board of the Australian Federation of Travel Agents (AFTA) has rejected assertions from some parts of the industry that IATA membership alone “can or should be the answer to accreditation”.

In a meeting following the AFTA AGM in Sydney yesterday where the new Constitution received 100% endorsement (**TD** 21 Jun), the Board deliberated on the ongoing review of the organisation’s strategic direction.

“One of the cornerstone commitments that shapes all our decisions is a focus on fairness, and this is embedded in our new Constitution...the reforms are many, including at voting level, with Member votes now aligned in a more balanced and fairer structure,” said Chairman Tom Manwaring, who was re-elected to his role along with deputy chairs Christian Hunter from Travellers Choice and Flight

Centre MD Graham Turner. “We made a commitment to Government 10 years ago when we deregulated that we would have an accreditation program that is meaningful, and that consumers can have confidence in,” Manwaring said.

“This is why so many of our resources go to ensuring ATAS is robust, including through managing complaints from consumers and supporting members in resolution of issues, checking financials and delivering a robust compliance regime.”

AFTA’s Board believes an approach solely based on IATA membership is not in the interest of either consumers or members.

“It ignores the reality that air is not the majority component of leisure travel, and falls short of the expectations of Government, consumers and the market that robust financial criteria are in place,” Manwaring concluded.

## Bruce’s Lifetime Achievement



**G ADVENTURES** founder Bruce Poon Tip (**pictured**) was recently honoured at the Agents’ Choice Awards Gala in Toronto, Canada, where the industry leader was bestowed the William H. Baxter Lifetime Achievement Award.

The prestigious honour was presented by Trevello’s Zeina Gedeon and TL Network’s Lindsay Pearlman, who shared some of Poon Tip’s notable achievements,

including his company’s rep as the “best place to work”.

Pearlman also praised his “active contribution to creating a more peaceful...world, while at the same time creating a model from which others can learn”.

The award follows the global success of G Adventures’ first feature film, *The Last Tourist*, launched to help travellers make better choices for the planet.

**CRUISE** Lines International Association (CLIA) mapped out the cruise sector’s vision for sustainable and responsible operations at the G20 Tourism Working Group meeting in Goa, India earlier this week.

The cruise body’s Managing Director in Australasia & Asia, Joel Katz, delivered a keynote presentation addressing the theme of ‘Making Cruise Tourism a Model for Sustainable & Responsible Travel’.

Katz highlighted the sector’s current worldwide “renaissance”, emphasising the industry’s “enormous potential” and its “clear vision for sustainable and responsibly managed operations”.

Speaking at the event, he explained that “cruise lines are investing heavily in new ships, new technologies and new propulsion systems that are already making a huge difference as we head towards zero-carbon cruising by 2050.

“The cruise industry is committed not only to reducing emissions and protecting the marine environment, but also to taking a leadership role when it comes to responsible tourism on land.

“Cruising offers great opportunities for destinations and cruise lines to work together

to achieve real benefits in ways that meet the needs of local communities.”

**Pictured:** CLIA Managing Director in Australasia and Asia Joel Katz (far right) with Ministers and industry representatives at the G20 Tourism Working Group meeting in Goa, India.

## Win-Win with EVT

**EVT** Hotels & Resorts has launched a meetings and events deal offering an extra 10% added value for every booking, as well as the chance to win a Rydges Melbourne experience, including a \$1,000 shopping spree.

The Win-Win promotion is open to new bookings made by 15 Jul - **CLICK HERE** for more details.

## Sunshine to Sydney

**VISIT** Sunshine Coast (VSC) Business Events is heading to Sydney on 28 Jul to host a ‘Sunshine Soiree’ showcasing some of the region’s best business events products, such as the newly launched events space, Ironbark Paddock.

The event includes a high-class lunch, cocktails and bubbles, and plenty of prizes at The Terrace on the Domain, and is open to Sydney buyers looking to host a business event on the Sunshine Coast.

To register **CLICK HERE**, and for more business events news, see **page six**.

## Paul launches 2025

**PAUL** Gauguin Cruises has announced its 2025 program, which consists of 26 sailings across six itineraries ranging from seven to 14 nights.

The season includes a new 10-night Tuamotus & Society Islands voyage featuring the line’s first-ever overnight stay in Fakarava, Tuamotu Archipelago - a UNESCO-listed Biosphere Reserve renowned for its marine habitat.

Travellers who book early can enjoy up to 30% savings on all-inclusive fares - **CLICK HERE**.

## HA promotes Andy

**HAWAIIAN** Airlines has promoted Andrew Stanbury to the role of Managing Director of International and North America, shifting from his previous position as Regional Director Australia and New Zealand.

His new remit will still look after the local market, but in addition to 15 new US mainland gateways and nine other overseas markets.



# Ponant celebrates 35th birthday!

**PONANT** recently marked its 35th anniversary with a series of exciting events throughout May and Jun. The celebrations commenced with the inaugural Kimberley sailing of the company's luxury superyacht *Le Ponant*, where key trade partners were the first to experience this magnificent yacht Down Under.

Ponant CEO Herve Gastinel also made a visit to the APAC head office in Sydney, where he hosted VIP guests, trade, and media partners for an update on Ponant's latest achievements and visions for the future.

The company also embarked on a remarkable 35th anniversary roadshow series, making stops at major cities across the country with over 1,000 attendees.

These events showcased Ponant's commitment to excellence and provided an opportunity for guests and trade partners to join in the celebration.

**THE** iconic three masted yacht, *Le Ponant*, sailing in the Kimberley for one season only this year.



**DEB** Corbett, GM Sales & Marketing Asia Pacific, hosting valued key trade partners onboard *Le Ponant*.

**CHARLES** Boutet, Marketing & Communications Director APAC; Chris Hall, CEO Asia Pacific; Sarina Bratton, Chairman APAC; Herve Gastinel, Ponant CEO; and Deb Corbett, GM Sales & Marketing APAC.



**ANOTHER** Ponant moment, having a glass of champagne at the mouth of King George Falls with Sebastian, Ponant Expedition Leader.



**MAXIME** Farrenq, Ponant; Andrew Millmore, Travel The World; Chris Hall, Ponant; Andrew Zhang, Travel The World; Jan Harrington, Helloworld; Jade Shaw, Helloworld; Carina Mullen, Creative Cruising; Danielle Galloway, Flight Centre Global; Caroline Brunel, Tahiti Tourisme; Rachel Kingswell, Travel Associates; Herve Gastinel, Ponant; Deb Corbett, Ponant; Nicole Boyer, CT Partners; Julie Rogers, Ponant; Roland Howlett, Frontier Travel; Sarina Bratton, Ponant; and Matt Mason, CT Partners.



**LE LAPEROUSE** made a surprise visit in Sydney! Gloria Chiu, Chung Pak Travel; Julie Golding Ponant BDM NSW/ACT; Deb Corbett, and Ryo Ijichi, Ponant.



**IT WAS** a full house at the Four Seasons in Sydney, as Expedition Leader Ryo Ijichi inspired many keen explorers to see the world with Ponant, including a newly launched Japan expedition program for 2024.





## LIGHT UP YOUR BUSINESS EVENT

**VOYAGES** Indigenous Tourism Australia's luminous new evening experience in the Red Centre is showcasing its unique appeal as a business events and incentive program destination.

Created in collaboration with the Anangu community, Wintjiri Wiru brings ancient Indigenous storytelling to life using state-of-the-art drone, laser and light projection technology presented against the incredible backdrop of Uluru (**TD** 11 May).

Voyages Indigenous Tourism Australia Director of Sales & Partnerships Peter Graham believes Wintjiri Wiru presents an opportunity for businesses to "go beyond the ordinary when planning their upcoming events". "What a great drawcard for

companies, PCOs and Event Planners who want to give their staff and their clients the opportunity to be among the first visitors to this exciting new experience," Graham explained.

"With a renewed interest in Indigenous experiences, Wintjiri Wiru delivers on the curiosity by Australian travellers to immerse themselves more deeply in our country's fascinating Indigenous history," he added.

Delegates will witness more than 1,100 glowing drones take to the sky along with choreographed lasers, all while enjoying delicious Indigenous cuisine made with native ingredients.

There are two nightly performances to choose from, including the three-hour Sunset



Dinner or the 1.5-hour After Dark show, with either able to be booked as exclusive use.

Wintjiri Wiru can be combined with other experiences on offer at Uluru, including Tali Wiru, an intimate four course dunetop dining experience for 20 people, and Sounds of Silence or A Night at Field of Light for larger groups.

For more, **CLICK HERE** or email [conferences@voyages.com.au](mailto:conferences@voyages.com.au).

### Melb event boost

**MELBOURNE'S** events calendar is set to get a hefty boost, after the Victorian Government announced \$3 million funding for events between 01 Jun-31 Dec.

The cash pool will be divided between 122 event organisers, who will use the funds to cover smaller creative, cultural and community sporting events.

**MEANWHILE**, the Melbourne Convention Bureau (MCB) has secured the rights to host the Amway China Leadership Seminar in 2025, which is set to attract more than 10,000 Chinese delegates to the garden city.

The event is predicted to fill 20,000 hotel room nights and generate \$46.4m to the state's economy, with delegates to spend four to five days visiting Melbourne's tourism attractions as well as trips to regional Victoria.

### Leaders awarded

**THE** Melbourne Convention & Exhibition Centre (MCEC) has recognised nine business and community leaders for their role in bringing int'l businesses events to the city, attracting around 16,400 visitors combined and approx \$23m in economic impact over the next five years.

Nine ambassadors from the centre's Club Melbourne Ambassador Program, which launched in 2005, were awarded during a ceremony held at Victoria by Farmer's Daughters restaurant.

### Syd gets inclusive

**SYDNEY** has affirmed its reputation as an inclusive business events destination after hosting the first and largest LGBTQIA+ Humans Rights Conference in the Southern Hemisphere.

The conference supported by Business Events Australia, was held over three days during Sydney WorldPride 2023 at the ICC, where 1,800 delegates from 67 countries came together to give a voice to First Nations people and LGBTQIA+ communities of the Asia Pacific region.

### Mojo Meet deal

**PULLMAN** Sydney Hyde Park has launched 'Monday Mojo Meet & Play', a new \$55-a-day delegate package with discounted accommodation rates.

The all-inclusive deal applies to meetings booked on a Mon in 2023 for the hotel's Ibis Room, which caters to more than 80 delegates; coffee, a selection of teas, and a buffet luncheon or deli spread is included in the offer.

**CLICK HERE** for more information.

### Wellington welcome

**NEW** Zealand's new convention centre, Takina Wellington, has welcomed its first international trade exhibition this week.

A group of 680 business events professionals convened in the NZ capital on Tue for the opening ceremony of Business Events Industry Aotearoa's MEETINGS 2023, set to be the largest in its 27-year history, with 224 exhibition stands and 400 buyers.

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## APPOINTMENTS

**WELCOME** to Industry Appointments, *Travel Daily's* Thursday feature which has the latest job appointments from across the industry. If you have just appointed someone to a new position and would like to update the industry email appointments@traveldaily.com.au.

Brisbane Airport Corporation (BAC) CEO **Gert-Jan de Graaff** has joined the Federal Government's **Australian Jet Zero Council** to better shape the future of sustainability in the aviation sector. The appointment aligns with BAC's goal to achieve net zero by 2025.

After almost a four-year stint at Hurtigruten, **Andrew Eddy** has joined **Adventure World** as Head of Sales. Based in the company's Sydney office, Eddy will use his in-depth understanding of the adventure and leisure travel sectors to help craft authentic, sustainable and ethical travelling experiences in the new role.

**Philip Logan** has become the new COO at **Royal Orchid Hotels**. Logan brings more than 30 years of experience in the hospitality industry to the role, including a one-year stint as a General Manager at Sofitel Sydney Wentworth and a similar role at Voyages Indigenous Tourism Australia. Royal Orchard is an India-based hotelier.

**Dorchester Collection** has named **Christopher Cowdray**, who is currently the CEO of the company, as the company's President from 01 Jul. Cowdray established the hotel management company 15 years ago and will manage performance, at the same time enhancing the company's identity and culture.

## TripADeal shoots, they score!!!

**TRIPADEAL** has announced a new global partnership with the New Orleans Pelicans, marking the first Australian International Team Marketing Plan (ITMP) partnership in the NBA.

The deal will see the two brands collaborate on "once-in-a-lifetime" NBA experiences for basketball fans globally, as well as exclusive travel deals and branding opportunities at Pelicans home games.



## Walk into Patagonia

**TOUR** Operator, Walk into Luxury, has signalled its expansion into Patagonia, with the introduction of a new range of premium journeys to the South American region.

The new collection offers expedition cruising in Patagonia and the Antarctic Peninsula, plus extension options to Atacama Desert, Iguazu Falls, Chile's Lakes District and Mendoza's Uco Valley, as well as signature walks and nature-based journeys.

Highlights include two W-Trek hike options in Chile's Torres del Paine National Park; a new Best of Patagonia signature journey which takes in the Perito Moreno Glacier; and a chance to hike at Mount Fitz Roy.

[CLICK HERE](#) for further details.

## Polishing up profitability



**TRAVELMANAGERS** has wrapped up its latest round of training days, which saw its personal travel managers (PTMs) equipped with tools and tips for building more profitable, higher-performing businesses.

Organised by TravelManagers' team of Business Partnership Managers (BPMs), the educational days included face-

to-face time with the company's Finance & Commercial Manager, Tanyu Cilek, who offered insights on how to grow profitability.

The PTMs also heard an update on available fare types from Fares & Ticketing Manager, Jose Canas, who also provided handy tips and tricks for using Amadeus.

**Pictured** after a productive day of learning: (back row L-R) Dionne Smith, Tanyu Cilek, Jose Canas, Nishani Ganash, Nicole Cocks, Zora Abbot (front row L-R) Lisa Leary, Heather Fijol, and Rose Febo.

## Intrepid 20% savings

**TRAVELLERS** can still take advantage of Intrepid's Great Escape Sale, which has been extended to 30 Jun due to popular demand.

The promotion offers up to 20% off a number of the operator's worldwide trips departing in 2023/24, such as the seven-day Inca Trail Express, as well as up to 25% off select Adventure Cruise and Galapagos trips departing between 01 Jul-30 Sep 2023.

Intrepid Travel is also giving the opportunity to save 10% off select worldwide trips between 01-31 Mar 2024 - for more information, [CLICK HERE](#).

## Paris explosion

**CLOSE** to 40 people have been injured in an explosion in the Latin Quarter of central Paris.

The area of the blast in the Rue Saint-Jacques is typically very popular with tourists and is close by to attractions like the Notre Dame cathedral and the Luxembourg Gardens.

No official cause of the blast has been determined, with some reports suggesting a gas leak may have been behind the incident.



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