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Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today features six pages of the latest news, plus a front cover from **Viking** and full pages from:

- Norwegian Cruise Line
- Uniworld Boutique River Cruises

The heart of Viking

VIKING is offering up to \$2,500 flight credit per couple on its ocean cruises, among a slate of offers as part of its new marketing campaign, which invites travellers to delve into 'the heart of exploring'.

Agents can discover Viking's new ocean, river and expedition offers and download the suite of new marketing assets available on the brand's online marketing centre - see the **cover page**.

Skroo says "Let 'em fly"

A NUMBER of key stakeholders over the weekend have strongly urged the Federal Government to reverse its decision to block Qatar Airways from doubling its capacity to Australia (**TD** 19 Jul).

Flight Centre is leading the charge, taking out full newspaper ads across the country to overturn the controversial call, with paid spots sporting slogans such as "More seats drive down prices" and "Let 'em fly".

Speaking about the ad blitz, Flight Centre CEO Graham Turner told the *Sunday Mail* it is "amazing" how much the decision "has got up the average Australian's nose".

"Everyone in the industry as far as I know wants lower airfares - it's good for customers, it's good for tourism, it's good for people visiting relatives who may not be able to afford the fares at the level they're at now," Turner said.

Echoing Flight Centre's call was Queensland's Acting Premier Steven Miles, who admitted he "shared the sentiment" of the Flight Centre push.

"If it were up to us they would be approved, but it's not up to us, we support Qatar Airways with their existing flights," he said.

Also joining the growing chorus of voices was The Council of Australian Tour Operators (CATO), who called for an "urgent review" of the govt's decision, adding that greater transparency is also required for future decisions.

Following a similar call voiced by the Australian Tourism Export Council last week (**TD** 01 Sep), CATO claimed the lack of transparency could lead to hesitation from airlines seeking to launch their services to Australia.

"Additional air capacity into Australia will provide immediate relief from high fares, boost the economy and create more jobs," CATO argued.

MEANWHILE a number of politicians have encouraged Qantas shareholders to vote against a \$10 million-plus share payout for outgoing CEO Alan Joyce (**TD** breaking news Fri). *AB*

TravelManagers celebrates winners

THE gala dinner wrapping up last weekend's TravelManagers conference in Christchurch honoured top performers across the network, with NSW-based Louise McCarthy named Personal Travel Manager of the Year 2023.

Other winners on the night included Oceania Cruises' Martine Nunes, named Top Sales Executive, while Judy Gillings took out the Barry Mayo Spirit Award and other winners included Elyse Palmer, Melanie Carter, Carli Hester, Robbie Barrett, David McCarthy, Erin Beckford and Vietnam Travel & Cruise, named as Supplier Partner of the Year.

Next year's conference host was revealed as Cairns.

LATAM back to Melb after pause

MELBOURNE welcomed the return of LATAM Airlines over the weekend, with the Latin American airline restarting direct flights to the Victorian capital from Santiago for the first time since the pandemic.

The carrier will operate three flights a week to Melbourne, creating 38,500 seats of capacity and generating \$52.5 million for the Victorian economy every year.

The flights will connect Victoria to Santiago, a major hub in Latin America, as well as other key markets in the region including Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Mexico, and Peru.

In 2019, Victoria attracted more than 80,000 visitors from Latin America, contributing \$242 million to the local economy.

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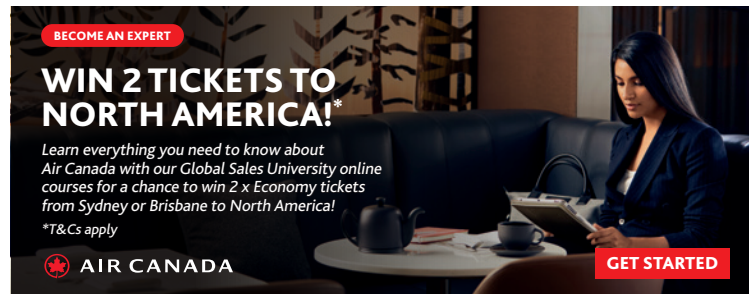
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AIR CANADA

GET STARTED



Peters joins ARS

AIRLINE Rep Services (ARS) has recruited Steve Peters to its growing sales team, where he has assumed a new Account Manager role to help drive business growth in Victoria and South Australia.

Peters brings a wealth of travel industry experience with him to the new role, having previously worked in the Australia-based team for Emirates.

“With his passion for the industry and building strong client partnerships, we are confident that Steve will play a pivotal role in our ongoing growth,” ARS VP Gabrielle Vicari said.

“This [appointment] makes ARS the only regional GSA company with their own physical offices in Syd/Mel/Ade/Per/Bris for Australia, plus Auckland in New Zealand and Nadi in Fiji.”

WWT seeing China boom

WENDY Wu Tours (WWT) is experiencing the best trading conditions in its almost 30-year history, with Australian travel agents sharing in the bonanza driven by strong China demand as well as other destinations.

In Australia last week, founder Wendy Wu told *Travel Daily* that China was 45-50% of the operator’s business in 2019, so border closures had heavily impacted sales which were down about 30% in Jan/Feb this year.

However with the reopening in mid-Mar, “we caught up with 2019, and every month since then it’s been better and better”.

“Now we’re doing so well that Aug is our highest-ever sales month,” Wu enthused.

Wendy Wu noted that when China reopened, she and her senior leadership team immediately headed there, and were welcomed with open arms.

“After the reopening the Chinese people are so warm, it’s like 20 years ago - you feel like a celebrity,” she said, adding “the customer experience is just so fantastic”.

Australian forward bookings for

Debt funding travel

AS MANY as two in five Australians put themselves into debt to fulfil their travel plans, according to new research from Compare the Market.

While 60% of travellers save their money and pay for holidays upfront at the time of booking, the remaining 40% rely on other methods, including credit card (15%), paying in installments (12%), using ‘Buy Now, Pay Later’ services (4.5%), and taking out a loan (2%).

Baby Boomers were most likely to use their credit card to pay for a holiday (19%), followed by Gen X (17%), while, perhaps surprisingly, Gen Z were the most fiscally responsible, with 67.5% opting to save up and pay in full at the time of booking.



Wendy Wu Tours are now sitting just 10% below 2019 levels, while in NZ and UK sales of the trips are “absolutely phenomenal”.

It’s not just about China, with Japan also proving popular as well as WWT’s burgeoning European portfolio, which follows the firm’s successful all-inclusive formula featuring all meals, centrally located three- and four-star accommodation, entrance fees and local guides.

MEANWHILE Wendy Wu Tours is coordinating a live event hosted from China this week, with the aim of revealing a “true glimpse” of what travel is like in China.

Other highlights will include input from everyday travellers and tourism features of China’s ancient city of Xian.

The stream will start at 7pm (AEST) on Thu - register **HERE**. *BP*

Hilton tax fight

HILTON Worldwide’s Australian arm has entered into a legal battle with the Australian Taxation Office (ATO), which alleges the hotel giant owes \$80.8 million in unpaid taxes.

In Jul, Hilton launched legal action in the Federal Court to dispute the ATO’s claims that it deliberately set up a scheme to avoid tax in Australia.

According to the 2022 accounts for Hilton’s Australian business, the ATO believes the company owes \$51 million in taxes over the sale of its flagship Hilton Sydney property in 2015.

The ATO is also seeking \$13 million in penalties and \$15.7 million in interest from Hilton, which has agreed to pay an instalment of \$26 million to the ATO in response to the claim.

QF Hotels frenzy

QANTAS is offering its Frequent Flyer members the ability to earn triple Qantas Points for every \$1 spent when booking a Qantas Hotel by 10 Sep, for travel until 04 Sep 2024.

The Triple Points Frenzy campaign allows customers to collect nine Qantas Points per \$1 value, with Points Club members to earn 25% more Qantas Points, and Points Club Plus members to earn 50% more Qantas Points.

The offer applies to all hotels booked through qantas.com/hotels, excluding Classic Hotel Rewards, Airbnb, and holiday packages, while Accor bookings will earn nine Qantas Points per \$1 value instead of the standard four Qantas Points.

Your member number will need to be quoted when purchasing.

VietJet free flights

VIETJET Air is offering Australian travellers free tickets within its entire international and domestic network as part of its 9.9 flash sale.

Tickets will have a base fare of \$0.00 on 09 Sep, with only taxes and surcharges to apply from 0:00 until 11:59pm GMT +7.

IATA calls for pause on Dutch flight cuts

THE International Air Transport Association (IATA) has warned that it would be “irresponsible on several levels” for the current Dutch Government, which has been in caretaker mode since its collapse in Jul, to proceed with proposed cuts to flight numbers at Schiphol Airport (**TD** 31 Jul).

The statement comes after the government successfully overturned a decision by the Dutch court to block its move to reduce the airport’s annual flight numbers from 500,000 to 460,000 under an ‘Experimental Regulation’, in an effort to curb noise pollution.

itravel



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The Chat with Jenny
Travel Daily



A Conversation with
Danielle Galloway
of Travel Associates

CLICK HERE to listen

Cruise needs to plan now

AUSTRALIA'S cruise industry needs to start planning for the next 10 years now, Australian Cruise Association (ACA) Chief Executive Officer Jill Abel told *Travel Daily* at the organisation's annual conference last week.

Speaking exclusively to *Travel Daily*, Abel said

sustainability needs to be at the forefront of Australia's cruise expansion, considering what is both environmentally and economically sustainable in order to build off the country's upcoming best-ever season.

"Looking at what infrastructure we need to actually facilitate that growth, and how that infrastructure is built and set up to meet those sustainable needs," she said.

Future fuel options was a large discussion point at the conference, particularly what future energy sources may look like, and how they may be accessed, which makes up part of ACA's goal to ensure sustainability commitments on board ships are also being matched on shore.

"Cruise has been very vocal about how they're being sustainable on board the ships, and we need to match some of that on shore," Abel insisted. MS

AIME applications

HOSTED buyer applications are now open for the 2024 Asia Pacific Incentives and Meetings Event (AIME) which will take place 19-21 Feb next year.

The Melbourne business events gathering is expected to host 500 buyers from across the globe, and welcome up to 400 exhibitors.

Hosted buyers who apply before 31 Oct and are accepted will also be in the running to win a Canadian experience sponsored by Air Canada and Club Med - more details at aime.com.au.

Laidley to present

THE Skall Club of Melbourne has revealed former AFL Coach and transgender educator Danielle Laidley as the guest speaker at the club's Thu before Grand Final Luncheon on 28 Sep at the MCG.

"Danielle is a riveting speaker and she will recount her compelling journey from premiership hero to transgender advocate" said Club President Tara Strickland said.

"We believe this is an important message that the travel and tourism industry will want and need to hear," she added.

Secure tickets [HERE](#).

Vietnam to PER

VIETNAM Airlines has scheduled a new route between Ho Chi Minh City and Perth.

The route will start flying on 11 Dec, just weeks after Vietnam's low-cost competitor Vietjet Air announced it will fly the SGN-PER route (TD 08 Aug).

Symphony's new tune

CRYSTAL Symphony has returned to service today after an extensive makeover, following A&K Travel Group's acquisition of Crystal Cruises earlier this year (TD 02 Feb), with the vessel sailing from Athens to Istanbul on its inaugural voyage, before sailing eastward.

Cruise Month toolkit

CRUISE Lines International Association (CLIA) has released its 2023 Cruise Month Toolkit travel agent members to use during the month-long celebration of cruising in Oct.

Now available for download in the CLIA Members Hub, the tools include branded marketing collateral for cruise promos, official logos, website and social page banners, backgrounds for Microsoft Teams, email signature banners, editable cruise deal flyers, and much more.

Download the tools [HERE](#).

Fill your heart with Ireland

What fills my heart?

The Strong Culture
- Jamie Lee

[CLICK HERE](#)

Travel & Cruise Weekly have ready-made social media toolkits to inspire your clients.

Intrepid sponsors Earth Experience

INTREPID Travel has announced it is the presenting partner of the BBC Earth Experience, which will open in Melbourne on 27 Oct.

The 360° audio-visual experience, which debuted in London earlier this year, takes visitors on a journey through incredible landscapes across the seven continents, with narration from Sir David Attenborough.

Tickets on sale Thu [HERE](#).

Singapore earlybird

TRAVELLERS can enjoy discounted fares with Singapore Airlines, which has launched an earlybird sale on 2024 flights across its global network.

The promotion, which ends 22 Sep, includes Hong Kong return Economy fares from \$771, as well as value-adds such as 15% off Pelago tours and activities.

Refer to [AGENT 360 HERE](#) for further details.

COVID visa gets the boot

AUSTRALIA'S COVID-era visa will be scrapped from Feb 2024, the Federal Government has formally announced.

The Pandemic Event visa was introduced in 2020 to assist stranded international students and address labour shortages during COVID-19 border closures.

The visa enabled a 12-month extension for expiring visas and multiple entries, with visa holders currently able to extend for six months at the cost of \$405.

However, beginning Feb next year, the visa will no longer accept new applications and will be completely discontinued.

In a joint statement, Home Affairs Minister Clare O'Neil and Immigration Minister Andrew Giles said the decision will offer "certainty to our visa system now that the circumstances that drove the operation of the visa no longer exist".

"The Pandemic Event visa

was an important part of Australia's visa system during the pandemic," he said.

Giles added, "we're providing an opportunity for people who hold a Pandemic Event visa to explore another visa option, or plan to leave Australia". *JM*

Visit Norway refresh

VISIT Norway has unveiled a fresh look for its website, which it says has been "optimised visually, in terms of content, and technically", with an emphasis on visual storytelling and scroll-friendly format for mobile users.

The website has been revamped to look and feel like a travel magazine, with feature articles covering places to stay, destinations, food, attractions, adventures and more.

A route planner will become available on the website soon, viewable [HERE](#) in nine languages.



Window Seat

A DEBATE has ensued about whether it's acceptable to go barefoot on a plane, after a passenger on a long-haul flight posted a video of a fellow traveller who had decided to take off his shoes and socks during the journey.

The offended traveller zooms on the barefoot traveller's feet, revealing unkept toenails, hairy feet, and one-too-many toes (a birth defect known as Polydactyly).

The TikTok video went viral, attracting 8.1 million views, with comments espousing a mix of opinions, and plenty of puns ("You know he's not lack toes intolerant").

While no consensus on the hairy situation was reached, many agree that socks should stay on at least!

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The South Australian Tourism Commission's events team, Events South Australia, is dedicated to delivering, growing and procuring nationally and internationally acclaimed events to promote South Australia as a tourism destination. The South Australian Tourism Commission owns and manages three major events including: Santos Tour Down Under, Tasting Australia Presented by RAA and the National Pharmacies Christmas Pageant.

Reporting directly to the Executive Director, Events South Australia, the General Manager, Commercial will be a key architect in driving the financial success of events, while simultaneously contributing to the prosperity of South Australia. Your contribution as a vital member of the management team will shape the overarching strategic direction of events for the South Australian Tourism Commission.

Confidential enquiries can be made to Phil Morton or Delinda Kalic at Morton Philips on 08 8210 8510. Applications are welcome in Word format through [Seek](#).

Morton Philips



TravelManagers party in Christchurch

LAST weekend's TravelManagers conference included a trade show, presentations, inspiration, karaoke, networking, activities, experiences, gala awards and so much more, with social action including a relaxed evening on Fri at Christchurch's Archie's Cirque Electriq arcade.

Industry suppliers were also out in force for the trade exhibition earlier in the day at the city's fabulous new Te Pae Convention Centre, which was followed by a host of sightseeing experiences such as zip lining, punting on the local river, e-biking, competitive cooking and even relaxation in oceanside hot pools.

These pics were taken over the weekend, with lots more from the TravelManagers conference at facebook.com/traveldaily.



TRAVELMANAGER of the Year Louise McCarthy (see p1) shows off her bowling prowess.

A GIGANTIC hungry hippos game was extremely popular and highly competitive.



ROWAN Lanser and Deirdre Parkes-Finch from United Airlines get set for an exciting mini-golf game.



A VIRTUAL roller coaster generated plenty of excited squeals and screams.



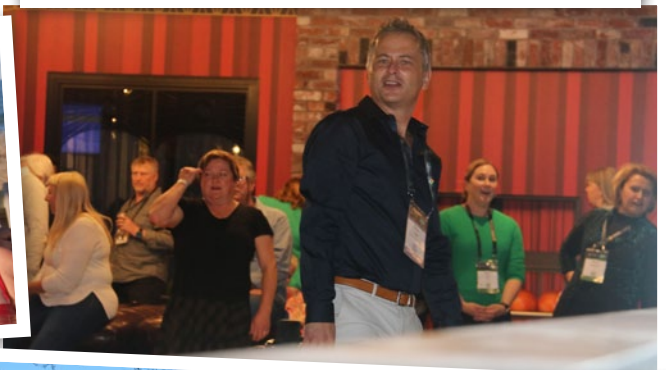
AIR New Zealand was one of the key conference supporters.



VIRGIN Voyages' Sharon Hando and Scott Ellis, GM of Sales at APT Travel Group.



SOAKING in hot pools by the ocean - what a lovely way to spend the afternoon!



TRAVELMANAGERS' Tanyu Cilek shows how it's done.



THE Tourism New Zealand team on deck at Te Pae.



PUNTERS after enjoying the serenity of Christchurch's Avon River.

BROCHURES

Send your special deals to:
brochures@traveldaily.com.au

THIS week's Brochures of the Week is brought to you by
AAT Kings.



AAT Kings - Australia 2024-2025

The new brochure from AAT Kings showcases its brand-new indigenous experience, the Aboriginal Culture & Australian Highlights Tour, focusing on the rich and ancient cultures of Australia. The tour is developed in response to opportunities identified by Tourism Australia, with the new journey based around AAT King's popular Fly Around itineraries exploring major icons and must-see destinations across Melbourne, Uluru, Sydney, Cairns, Great Barrier Reef, and more. The travel guide also provides a range of valuable feedback from travel agent partners to further enhance the operator's tours.



Ponant - Luxury Expedition Mar-Nov 2024

Ponant has printed a 116-page brochure to invite travellers to step into the realm of possibilities with the cruise line's itineraries from Mar to Nov in 2024. Highlights of the collection includes diving into the storied history of the Mediterranean and a voyage along the Kimberley Coast that has been shaped over two billion years. The meticulously crafted brochure also reveals a brand-new expedition to experience the majestic beauty of the Great Lakes of North America, as well as joyful encounters in the cities of Japan "like never before". Read the brochure to learn more about Ponant's exhilarating adventure around the globe.



Chimu Adventures - Signature South America

The 30-page Signature South America brochure is a short but sweet tool to learn all about traversing the continent. The in-depth travel guide includes itineraries consisting of handpicked hotels, authentic experiences, unique cuisines, airport transfers and more benefits when travelling with Chimu Adventures. Each itinerary featured in the brochure has a "Why you will love this itinerary" column for keen explorers to see if the tour will suit their best interests. Travellers can select tours between the span of three and 21 days across various nations on the continent.

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NH Hotel debuts in Australia



MINOR Hotels is bringing its NH Hotel brand to Australia for the first time, with the recently unveiled NH Sydney Airport.

Slated for a 2026 completion, the \$55 million property will be positioned in Mascot, in close proximity to downtown Sydney and the airport.

The hotel will offer more than 90 stylish rooms, a lobby restaurant and bar with all-day dining options, and modern communal spaces.

Minor Hotels Australia and NZ

CEO Craig Hooley enthused, "a high-profile brand throughout Europe and the Americas, we are confident that NH Hotels' easy-going, urban and fresh service offering will be very well received by Australian travellers".

The property is being developed alongside NH Collection Sydney, due to open in 2025 as the first hotel under the boutique NH Collection brand in Australia.

Novotel on Kitchener

ACCOR has inked an agreement with Worldwide Hotels Group to open Novotel Singapore on Kitchener, representing the largest-ever single-asset hotel transaction in Singapore.

Previously the PARKROYAL on Kitchener Road, the 543-key property will be rebranded and opened on 01 Nov.

Features include a swimming pool, exclusive lounges, a gym, as well as revamped guestrooms.

New W lands in UAE

SLATED for a first-quarter opening in 2027, Marriott International has announced the first W Hotels brand in the UAE emirate of Ras Al Khaimah.

W Al Marjan Island promises to offer "bold design, outstanding service and always-on programming", while also being in close proximity to the city's cultural & adventure attractions.

Marking W Hotels fourth property in the UAE, the 300-room property will feature three restaurants, a spa, a fitness centre, and multiple retail spaces.





Mediterranean

New Zealand

NCL'S

4TH ANNUAL

WALK FOR WELLNESS

1 – 31 OCTOBER 2023

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#NCLW4W #NCLCARES

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