



## CRUISE WEEK

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## FCTG names Hitchen

**FLIGHT** Centre Travel Group (FCTG) has recruited former Creative Cruising GM Caroline Hitchen to lead its new cruise wholesale division.

Taking on the role of GM of Cruise Wholesale for CruiseHQ, Hitchen will help steer the launch of B2B curated fly/cruise packages to FCTG's networks.

The appointment follows a host of big hires earlier this month (TD 05 Sep) - more details in **CW**.

## TA moves to panel strategy

**UNIQUE** circumstances facing Australia's tourism sector following the pause in international travel has led to a change in agency strategy for Tourism Australia (TA).

The country's peak tourism body has revealed it is shifting to a panel model for creative and digital agency providers as it seeks to respond to future opportunities and challenges.

As a result, TA has commenced a competitive tender process for the provision of integrated global creative and digital services.

Managing Director Phillipa Harrison (**pictured**) said the change was needed for both flexibility and to confront the growing number of competitor destinations which are all looking to strengthen their visitor economies.

"The change in approach to our global creative and digital services for the future is about giving our organisation the flexibility it needs to respond to a range of scenarios that could emerge in a rapidly changing world," she said.

"Currently we are in a strong



position with the return of international travel steadily rebuilding back to pre-pandemic levels and our global campaign 'Come and Say G'day' gaining traction internationally.

"Despite this success, as international tourism continues to recover from several tumultuous years of disruption, we are facing competition for the tourist dollar," Harrison added.

Tourism Australia Chief Marketing Officer Susan Coghill added that the increasingly dynamic nature of tourism marketing also meant that a more varied approach was needed.

"What we have seen in recent years, more so than at any other time, is just how quickly our external environment can impact the marketing we do and where we need to respond swiftly on multiple fronts," she observed. **AB**

## NCL gone in a flash!

**NORWEGIAN** Cruise Line (NCL) has launched a flash sale offering up to 35% off cruises on 18 of its award-winning ships, a \$500 airfare credit on select sailings, a free beverage package, and more - see the **back page** for details.

### Today's issue of TD

*Travel Daily* today features five pages of the latest news, plus a full page from **Norwegian Cruise Line**.

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## CTM grows Adriatic reach

**CORPORATE** Travel Management (CTM) has announced the addition of Croatia-based destination management company (DMC), Obzor Putovanja, to its global agency network.

The new member will expand CTM's corporate and MICE servicing capabilities in Croatia and the wider Adriatic region.

Established as a subsidiary of flag carrier Croatia Airlines in 1993, the full-scale DMC offers customised travel and exclusive experiences for leisure groups, incentive trips, and corporate events.

CTM & Radius Travel Agency Partnerships Program Vice President, Rafael Gonzalez, said he is "thrilled" to welcome Obzor Putovanja to the network.

"As with all of our existing and new global partners, Obzor Putovanja meets our high standards for partnership and will add value to the network and strengthen our position in the region," he commented.

Obzor Putovanja General Manager Romana Zizak shared the DMO is "extremely pleased to become a CTM & Radius Travel Global Partner", and added that the partnership will help the organisation further grow.

"We will now be able to offer service around the world to global companies or accompany our current clients to expand globally - exciting times ahead." JM

## EK to roll out orders

**EMIRATES** will introduce its new in-flight meal pre-ordering option across more global routes in the coming months, following a successful trial on its routes in the UK (**TD** 21 Jul).

The new service allows Business class passengers to preselect their main course between 14 days and 24 hours ahead of their flight departures, ensuring they get their preferred choice as well as helping to reduce food wastage.

The initiative is currently being rolled out across routes to and from European cities including Warsaw, Venice, Rome, Bologna, Prague, Vienna, and more.

## Call was "very unfair"

**QATAR** Airways Chief Executive Officer Akbar Al Baker has slammed the Australian Govt's decision to block the carrier's request for extra flights to the country as "very unfair".

Breaking his silence on the issue, al Baker told CNN he was "very surprised" at the decision, pointing out that Qatar Airways had helped repatriate stranded Aussies from around the world during the COVID-19 period.

"We were there for the people of Australia," he emphasised.

## A celebratory Link-up



**THE** Link Travel Group (LTG) board gathered in Brisbane last week to toast what has been a stellar start-up year for the new joint-venture, and to farewell an inaugural director.

Melanie Waters-Ryan is stepping down from the LTG board to enjoy her well-earned retirement, following her departure from Flight Centre earlier this year after 35 years with the business (**TD** 14 Nov 2022).

Link Travel Group General Manager Scott Darlow praised Waters-Ryan's contribution, saying, "having Melanie as part of our inaugural board was a privilege for us and we were able to tap her extensive experience and knowledge and she played a major part in the group's rapid expansion and success".

"Mel has been an industry icon for many years, and she has inspired a generation of leaders, especially women, to follow their dreams and reach for the stars."

After launching in May, LTG has gone from strength to strength, most recently welcoming Martini Travel and Express Travel Group agency Travel Associates Australia to its ranks (**TD** 14 Aug).

**Pictured** celebrating are: Anthony Goldman, Link Director; Graham "Skroo" Turner, FCTG CEO; Scott Darlow, Link General Manager; Penny Spencer, Link Director; Danielle Galloway, Link Chair; Greg Parker, incoming Link Director; Melanie Waters-Ryan, outgoing Link Director; James Kavanagh, Link Director; and Ewan Thomas, Link Finance Business Partner. JM

**The Chat with Jenny**



**A Conversation with Jean Summers-Reeves of Clean Cruising**

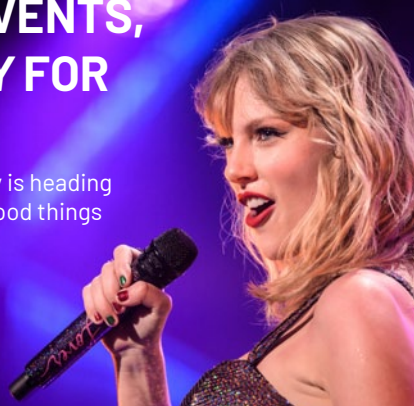
Click [HERE](#) to listen



## TOURISM & EVENTS, A LOVE STORY FOR THE AGES?

Taylor Swift's Eras economy is heading to Australia, and it means good things for travel.

[CLICK HERE TO READ](#)



**travelBulletin**



## It's TIME to become a virtuoso



**VIRTUOSO** has teamed up with Travel Industry Mentor Experience (TIME) to offer a rare scholarship opportunity for a TIME graduate to experience Virtuoso Travel Week in person.

This year's recipient, Tenille Hunt from Quark Expeditions, said the global network's conference "provided me a greater insight into the greater community of luxury travel". "Throughout the week-long event I was fortunate to view Virtuoso Travel Week through the lens of both an advisor as well as a partner and to experience an event with over 5,000 passionate attendees from over 105 countries was truly exhilarating. "The experience was invaluable, to my career, and this would not have been possible without the TIME program and Virtuoso Australia & New Zealand who provided access to the scholarship

for this prestigious event," Hunt (pictured) enthused.

For more info on becoming a TIME program mentee, **CLICK HERE**, or email Marie at [time@travelindustrymentor.com.au](mailto:time@travelindustrymentor.com.au). JM

## Isa wide open for AB

**BONZA** has announced a new direct Gold Coast to Mount Isa service will take flight from 05 Dec, operating twice weekly.

The budget carrier's CEO Tim Jordan said the new route will boost the regions' tourism opportunities as well as allow more Mt Isa-based FIFO workers to connect with loved ones.

"[Bonza] is about connecting more Aussies to their backyard than ever before and this new route will bring more tourists to Mount Isa from the Gold Coast and Northern NSW," Jordan said this morning.

## ACCC cajoles VA on credits

**THE** spotlight is now on Virgin Australia to follow Qantas' belated decision to scrap travel credit expiry dates after the ACCC publicly urged the carrier to follow suit.

Virgin is estimated to have around \$120 million of COVID-related credits still outstanding, with customers still under pressure to use them before the expiry date of 31 Dec.

The COVID credits represent around 10% of the \$1.2 billion worth of cancelled pandemic-related bookings, with an ACCC spokesperson stating VA needs to make strides to ensure Aussie travellers have the best chance to use outstanding credits.

"The ACCC encourages Virgin to extend its credit expiry dates for all COVID flight credits to ensure consumers are able to effectively use these credits," the competition watchdog said.

In response, VA told *Travel Daily* the carrier "is in the process of reviewing our 'COVID Credit'

expiry dates and will update our customers as soon as the review is complete."

VA also stressed that customers have already redeemed 90% of the COVID credits issued since Bain took over the company more three years ago, adding that it had previously extended the date multiple times in recognition of the ongoing challenges COVID posed to travel.

"We communicate with customers about credits, including the expiry dates via our website, monthly trade releases and email," VA noted.

The airline also has around \$300 million in credits still to be cashed out by customers who held credits prior to VA entering administration and being bought by Bain Capital in 2020. AB

## Crooked protection

**TOUR** operator Crooked Compass has moved to shore up the confidence of its guests by partnering with travel risk manager Global Rescue.

Under the new deal, travellers can sign up for additional travel protection, with Global Rescue offering services such as medical and security evacuation.

Memberships start at \$139 for a seven-day medical membership and go up to a five-year medical/security membership, and includes up to \$500k in evacuation costs.

Learn more about the added insurance protection **HERE**.

## Club Med in S Africa

**CLUB** Med has announced its entry into the South African market, with a local investment in northern KwaZulu-Natal.

The country will receive its first all-inclusive Club Med Resort through a joint venture between Collins Residential and the international hospitality group.

Construction is set to begin early next year, with the resort opening around Jul 2026.



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## Window Seat

**COUNTLESS** Elvis fans have visited the late singer's Memphis property, Graceland, which has become a popular tourist site...but how many can say they've been in the King of Rock 'n' Roll's pool?

A TikTok video which has amassed 14 million views shows hardcore Elvis fan Tommy Purcell hopping over a fence which reads 'Restricted Area: Do Not Enter', before stepping onto the diving board and jumping into the late crooner's pool.

However, the tourist's daring dip was cut short when a security guard rushed over to escort him off the premises.

Some TikTok commenters labelled the intruder's actions as disrespectful and not funny, while others took a more lighthearted viewpoint and said the stunt was "worth it".

In a follow-up video, Purcell's wife defended her husband's actions, saying the *Hound Dog* singer would have approved.

"Elvis caught someone jumping in his pool once and he never stopped them... he told them to stay in the pool," she explained.

Regardless, we will never know if Elvis would have been *All Shook Up*, or if he would've simply said *That's All Right*. JM

## Aussies get a taste of Taiwan!



**AUSTRALIAN** travel agents were invited to "Say Hello to Taiwan" during a roadshow Down Under hosted by The Taiwan Tourism Bureau and Taiwan Visitor's Association.

The events visited Auckland, Sydney, Brisbane, and Melbourne between 04-11 Sep, showcasing an impressive lineup of activities and presentations bringing a taste of Taiwan's rich culture, culinary delights, and tourism offerings.

Participants were able to network and engage with key industry experts, clients, and business leaders from prominent names in the industry, including EVA Airways, Meet Taiwan, Lion Travel, and many more.

Highlights from the roadshow included a bartender presentation by Bar Mood Taipei and interactive cooking classes by Cookinn Taiwan & Toucheng Farm (pictured). JM

## A320neo issues

**BETWEEN** 600 and 700 Pratt & Whitney engines installed on Airbus A320neos will require planes to be taken out of service for lengthy quality inspections between 2023 and 2026, potentially causing major havoc for future travel schedules, according to *Reuters*.

Media reports suggest inspections will commence from this month and are needed due to a rare powder metal defect which could lead to the cracking of some engine components.

In bad news for airlines deploying A320neos, repair work could take as long as 300 days per engine, with around 350 jets to be grounded a year to 2026.

It's unclear how the news might impact Qantas, which made the call to replace its Boeing narrowbody aircraft with Airbus A320neos and A220 families of planes starting from the end of this year.

## Sharing the burden

**TRAVEL** Agent Finder's Anna Shannon has banded together with Destination Webinar's Charlie Trevena to contract a shared part-time digital marketing assistant, Rebecca Lavender.

The two sole traders said the unique approach is their solution to overcoming industry labour shortages by sharing a resource.

## European roadshow

**AGENTS** will have the chance to learn more about a range of key European destinations at an upcoming roadshow in Oct.

Rail Europe, the European Travel Commission (ETC) and VisitBritain have partnered to create the inaugural Visit Europe & Britain Roadshow, with agents invited to attend an event in Melbourne on 31 Oct or Sydney on 01 Nov.

Updates will be delivered by Atout France, the Italian National Tourist Board, Switzerland Tourism, Tourism Ireland, the Austrian National Tourist Office, Visit Monaco, Spain Tourism Board, Visit Portugal, VisitBritain and Rail Europe - with prizes also in the mix as an added incentive to learn more about each market.

"ETC has been implementing its Horizon 2022 marketing strategy which promotes Europe as a collection of meaningful experiences that connect with people's passions, and only secondly refers to the places where it all happens," ETC Marketing Project Manager Ludivine Destree said.

Invites will be sent out shortly, however expressions of interest can be sent to Rail Europe reps James Hooper ([HERE](#)) or Grant Robertson ([HERE](#)).

## Japan rail price hike

**JAPAN** rail tickets will increase by more than 70% from 01 Oct, a spokesperson for Japan Railways Group has confirmed.

The price hike, originally flagged last year (*TD* 04 May 2022), will see the seven-day Rail Pass increase from 29,650yen (A\$315) to 50,000yen (A\$530).

However tour operator InsideJapan has reassured travel agents that the price hike "doesn't mean the end of rail travel in Japan", revealing it is looking to incorporate more individual tickets in its Small Group Tours and Self-Guided Adventures travel itineraries, and is also reminding advisors to secure passes before the hike.

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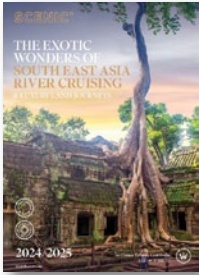
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### Scenic - 2024/2025 South East Asia River Cruising

To fully present the all-inclusive ultra-luxury Mekong river cruises in 2024 or 2025, Scenic has gone to press to unearth the opportunity to traverse the vivid destinations of Vietnam and Cambodia. Boarding the 68-guest, five-star vessel, *Scenic Spirit*, travellers are invited to journey across a seven- or a nine-night voyage on the river. Other luxury land expeditions include locations such as Siem Reap, Ho Chi Minh City, Hoi An, Hanoi and

much more inside the travel guide.



### Collette - Classic & Small Group Touring 2024-25

Collette is preparing to embark on its 106th travel season with a detailed brochure, including over 170 tours to all continents around the globe. The 220-page world tour bible depicts highlights of specific destinations to accommodate all kinds of travellers. Boasting four travel styles of small group explorations and spotlighting hotel stays, cruising and spiritual journeys, holiday makers can learn it all from Collette's latest brochure.



### AAT Kings - New Zealand 2024-2025

Experience the unique culture of New Zealand through AAT Kings' brochure showcasing the diverse nation. Explorers can experience exclusive adventures throughout New Zealand, including stargazing in the Southern Hemisphere's only dark sky reserve, accompanied by penguins while cruising on Milford Sound and more. Most itineraries include full-buffet breakfasts, some highlight dinners and more culinary experiences.



### Adventure Wild - Kimberley Tours

Adventure awaits for those who are keen to explore the Kimberley with Adventure Wild's all-inclusive 12-day Kimberley Tour. Slated to only travel with a maximum of 16 guests, the tour will discover the unique diversity of the Kimberley region with two experienced guides. The itinerary is complemented by a free Danggu (Geike Gorge) cruise, travel bag and sleeping bag. Travellers will also be transported by custom-built vehicles.

## Warriors fly with Air NZ!



**AIR** New Zealand invited 170 passionate Warriors' fans on the 'Wahs Express', a special flight from Christchurch to Auckland on Sat hosted by former Warriors player Awen Guttenbeil.

The league legend supported the crew, took plenty of selfies with the lucky pax, and surprised fans on board with giveaways.

"It was awesome to be on board the Wahs Express today, helping Air New Zealand get Wahs fans to the game," he enthused.

"It's important the team has as much home support as they can and it's great that fans from around Aotearoa will be there to cheer the boys on."

Air New Zealand Chief Greg Foran said he was thrilled to bring loyal Warriors' fans north for the NRL preliminary final, which saw the Warriors claim victory over the Newcastle Knights.

**Pictured:** Te Aorere Theo Redmond, Air New Zealand; Foran; Guttenbeil; and Laura Davidson, Air New Zealand. *JM*

## Heathrow strikes

**HEATHROW** Airport is bracing for chaos next month, as baggage workers prepare to strike.

One-hundred-and-seventy members of the Unite Union will reportedly walk out over an ongoing pay dispute.

They will strike over 13 days to coincide with school holidays.

## More Morocco aid

**WORLD** Expeditions Foundations has launched a fundraising appeal for Morocco's High Atlas mountain range, in response to the devastating Marrakesh-Safi earthquake which struck earlier this month.

The epicentre of the earthquake was located in the range, and has left several villages in ruins or heavily damaged.

Funds generated by the tour operator will be channelled directly into the reconstruction efforts aimed at helping the impacted villages, with World Expeditions kickstarting the campaign with \$10,000.

Got a confidential tip? Contact Travel Daily via our secure WhatsApp service on +61 2 8007 6760 or click [HERE](#)

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