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**CHOOSE NOW >>>**

## Today's issue of TD

*Travel Daily* today features seven news pages including our **Sustainability** page, a special feature from **Railbookers** and a photo page from **TravelManagers**, plus a front cover from **Travellers Choice** and a full page from **Silversea**.

## The time is now

**THE** time is now to choose a new future for your business and join the supporting Travellers Choice network.

See what outstanding really means and visit the **front page**.

## NCLH orders up big

**NORWEGIAN** Cruise Line Holdings (NCLH) has overnight actioned one of the largest ship orders in its history, with a contract signed for eight vessels across all three of its brands.

The new vessels are set to join NCLH's fleet between 2026 and 2036, with NCL to receive four in 2030, 2032, 2034 and 2036.

Building on the success of its Allura Class ships, Oceania Cruises is scheduled to take delivery of two more in 2027 and 2029, adding to the Allura ship already being delivered in 2025.

Meanwhile, Regent Seven Seas Cruises' fleet will be bolstered by two 850-passenger ships, to be delivered in 2026 and 2029.

The contract has been signed with Italian shipbuilder Fincantieri, with details regarding the ships' amenities, staterooms, and sustainability to be detailed in the coming months.

NCLH has also revealed construction plans for a multi-ship pier at Great Stirrup Cay, its private island in the Bahamas.

## Enjoying the luxury of network support

**ONE** of Sydney's leading luxury travel agencies has this week joined the growing Travellers Choice independent network.

Based in St Ives, Sydney, Luxeworld is staffed by a team of seven consultants, and is led by Store Manager Emily Soutter.

Luxeworld Director, Lionel Bonnafous, said the agency joined Travellers Choice because it was seeking to link with a retail group that could offer strong buying power and support services tailored to expanding independent operators.

"We were drawn to Travellers Choice because it is a member-owned group, with a talented management team and a clear value-proposition based around high quality and innovative services," Bonnafous said.

"We were also impressed by Travellers Choice's 'Accelerate' membership package, which is specifically designed to meet the needs of fast-growing companies such as ours," he added.

Travellers Choice's 'Accelerate' membership option offers independent businesses an attractive remuneration structure

## Hulm at the helm

**LANGHAM** Hospitality has announced the appointment of Alison Hulm to Director - Development, Australasia.

In the newly created position, Hulm will be tasked with crafting and executing the group's strategic growth and development plans for the region, with a focus on growing its hotel management business and expanding the presence of The Langham & Cordis Hotels brands.



that includes quarterly override payments, along with access to the group's full suite of agency support services.

These include its exclusive TC One booking platform and Site Builder website solution.

Accelerate is one of three membership solutions Travellers Choice offers its members, with each incorporating different levels of business services and financial benefits.

The other two options include Active, geared towards home-based businesses, as well as Elevate, a full-service offering giving businesses a complete

suite of tools and services.

Members are also allowed to move seamlessly between the packages, depending on their evolving needs and potential growth trajectories.

The arrival of Luxeworld is just the latest chapter in the expanding Travellers Choice network this year, with the group recently adding new members in New South Wales, Queensland and Western Australia.

**Pictured:** Paul Millan, Travellers Choice; Lionel Bonnafous, Luxeworld; Emily Soutter, Luxeworld; and Paula Moylan, Travellers Choice. *AB*

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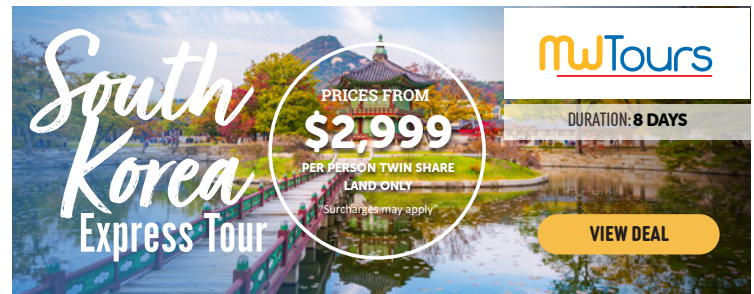
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## ETC walks tall with Park Trek

**EVOLUTION** Travel Collective (ETC) has signed a new representation partnership with its first domestic client, with the business tasked with lifting the profile of Park Trek Walking Holidays (Park Trek) in the minds of Aussie travellers and agents.

The 25-year-old company operates small group guided walking tours across Australia, but under new owner and Managing Director, Charles Thompson (**pictured**), it is seeking to enhance its relationship with travel sellers.

“ETC’s unrivalled expertise will ensure we are front-of-mind with Australian agents when it comes to incredible Australian walking product,” Thompson said.

“Our experiences are unique in so many ways, of course we walk in some of Australia’s most stunning and iconic places, however it’s all the little moments on our tours that make them so special,” he added.

Park Trek runs walks with a maximum group size of just 10 people, and all tours include boutique accommodation, meals and luggage transfers.

Walking distances typically range from three to 15 kilometres per day, depending on the tour.

Park Trek also has a team in place to assist agents with product advice and booking support regarding private group or individual enquiries.

Reflecting on ETC’s first domestic tourism client win this



week, CEO Pete Rawley said Park Trek was well placed to take full advantage of the growing trend to slow down on leisure breaks.

“We all now recognise the importance of slowing down and enjoying our local surrounds so a walking tour is the perfect way to do that, whilst also being an environmentally-friendly traveller,” he said.

Park Trek owner and Managing Director, Charles Thompson, purchased the business in 2021.

Highlights of its stable of walking tours include a four-day Great Ocean Road trip, as well as a nine-day Flinders Range hiking adventure with camels - see the full range of tours [HERE](#). **AB**

### Win a Nova sailing

**AGENTS** have the chance of earning a spot aboard Silversea’s ultra luxury *Silver Nova*.

To be in the running, advisors need to make and register three new ANZ bookings by 30 Apr.

See the **back page** for info.

## Hidden Japan gems

**INSIDEJAPAN** Tours has introduced its ‘Hidden Zen’ tour, offering travellers a 14-night exploration of the country’s lesser-known regions along the Hokuriku Shinkansen bullet train route, linking the cities of Kanazawa to Tsuruga.

The self-guided tour features walks through bamboo forests, hot springs, and Japanese-owned accommodation from luxury hotels to traditional ryokans. Prices start from \$11,457pp.

## Princess shows Pryde

**PRINCESS** Cruises has this week promoted experienced travel executive Heather Pryde to the position of Accounts & Trade Support Manager.

Pryde has been with the cruise line for close to five years and was previously National Account Manager, a role she had held since Apr 2020.

Before her tenure at Princess, Hyde worked as a Tour Leader with Topdeck in London and Carnival Cruise Line before that.

## Rail Europe



### Unlock European Trains with Grant Robertson

#### Rail Europe Support

**Contact Us:** The most effective and efficient way to receive assistance from our team of experts is via the ‘Contact Us’ page, where you can submit your issue according to the categories provided (after sales, booking a journey, payment, account management and AD75/comp passes). [Click HERE](#) to get in touch.

**Customer Service:** Our dedicated operational support

team is available 24/5 and reduced hours over the weekend so expect to hear back from the team quickly.

**Expert Tip:** European train timetables are usually amended twice a year on the second Sunday in June & December. As such, you might not be able to book as far in advance as you would expect during these times. Refer to this [Booking Horizon](#) article or ask our [support team](#) for advice.

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Whistler Village © Tourism Whistler / Mike Crane

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**SPEAK TO OUR TEAM OF SPECIALISTS TODAY.**

## Western Sydney warning



**WESTERN** Sydney tourism operators “don’t have the luxury of time” and risk getting left behind if they don’t prepare for the influx of international visitors expected over the coming years, according to the Australian Tourism Export Council (ATEC).

The comment was made by the council’s Tourism Partnerships Specialist, Jennifer Bruce, at the Lights On Western Sydney Visitor Economy Forum last week, which took place at the new Western Sydney Conference Centre.

“While the appetite is there... there’s still a little resistance post-COVID to delve in and target the international markets,” said Bruce, who spoke on a panel with several other key tourism attraction providers.

The candid response came after Bruce was asked whether the region’s tourism operators were ready to capitalise on the Western Sydney International Airport’s (WSI) upcoming opening in 2026 (**TD** 05 Apr).

“This airport opening is changing the game for us...if [tour operators] aren’t collectively offering some great commercial opportunities and experiences to the international markets, they aren’t going to stay,” the ATEC representative warned.

Instead, visitors will favour Sydney east and Sydney CBD, which will mean Western Sydney “loses the opportunity for them to stay at some of our great hotels in the region and to

experience more here”.

Bruce also pointed out that the new airport will change how day tours operate, opening up new areas that day tour operators are not currently going to.

“For example, the day tours to the Blue Mountains [will] go back home via the Hawkesbury, because they now have an extra two-and-a-half hours to two hours in their day, so if you’re a small operator in the Hawkesbury and you do tastings...are you talking to ATEC about who are those luxury markets that we can now tap into and help reshape that day tour?”

Bruce’s advice to small tourism businesses in the region is to talk to ATEC about how they can fit into an itinerary to the Blue Mountains, and to develop an understanding about which markets they should be targeting.

In order to get “airport-ready”, Western Sydney tourism businesses need to “start now”, bearing in mind that it can take up to two to three years to make inroads when it comes to the international market.

“It’s imperative that you’re digital ready to start with...if you’re not online and workable, then you do not exist at all in the tourism context,” Bruce said.

She also urged operators to lean on their local government representatives, visitor economy specialists and regional tourism organisations to help them “make the leap as quickly as possible” to become airport-ready. *JM*

## The Chat

with Jenny



**Travel Daily**  
A conversation with  
Fiona Dalton

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## ATIA UPDATE

from Dean Long, CEO



**WHILE** it won’t be a surprise for those of us in the industry, last year ATAS travel businesses sold close to 19 million airline tickets worth more than \$18 billion.

Excitingly, the demand for ATIA members continues to increase every year and this year we are beating our 2023 performance by more than 13%.

In Feb alone, we sold nearly \$1.1 billion of airline tickets to Australians.

If we continue this impressive growth rate, ATAS members will be on track to set a new all-time record by the end of 2024.

As an industry we remain the preferred choice of Australians when it comes to purchasing travel trips.

Underpinning this is the trust the community has put in you, our travel professionals.

With this in mind, we have been working through the results of the 2024 *Edelman Trust Barometer*. The Barometer has been conducted for the last 24 years and it has some surprising

insights into the importance of trust in governments, media, and businesses.

The research had two main findings which are relevant to travel; firstly, we must further improve how we manage innovation and change.

More than 32,000 respondents rated businesses as the most capable of successfully managing the implementation of innovation.

It found that stakeholders who worked together in partnership to implement change or an innovation had the highest possibility of acceptance and ultimately success.

Secondly for ATIA, our government tourism bodies and media partners, we must continue to improve how we conduct our research and present the findings to ensure the community trust what we say.

Nearly 60% of Australians worry that government, business leaders and journalists respectively are purposely trying to mislead people by stating things they know are false or gross exaggerations. If the community doesn’t trust our numbers, we will ultimately lose our social license to operate.

## Crystal clear on referrals

**CRYSTAL** has launched a new referral program designed to better reward guests who introduce friends and family to the luxury cruise brand.

The new sales initiative works by giving a 5% discount credit to the former guest making the referral, as well as the same amount off for customers making the booking - so long as the client is new to the Crystal brand.

There is also no limit on the number of referred guests.

“We believe that the joy of



cruising is best shared with friends, and this opportunity not only rewards our guests for their referrals but also extends the warm embrace of the Crystal family to new travellers,” A&K Travel Group Chief Sales Officer, Marett Taylor, said. *AB*

Content produced in collaboration with Railbookers

# Railbookers brings back its New Zealand journeys



**RAILBOOKERS** is excited to announce the return of New Zealand to its portfolio, with six new itineraries ranging from eight to 19 days, tailored for the ultimate exploration of the North and South Islands via scenic train and ferry journeys.

The rail provider's packages simplify travel, combining breathtaking routes on the Northern Explorer, Coastal Pacific, and TranzAlpine trains, as well as the Inter Islander ferry, with accommodations, sightseeing, and immersive cultural experiences.

These itineraries are designed to meet the growing demand

for New Zealand's awe-inspiring landscapes, from national parks to iconic film locations, without the complexities of planning.

Railbookers' holidays encompass the most incredible destinations in New Zealand,

including Auckland, Christchurch, Dunedin and Queenstown.

Railbookers invites agents to offer clients the ease of rail travel, uncovering New Zealand's hidden gems and diverse experiences from the comfort of their seat.

Explore Railbookers' travel agent portal for more information on these exclusive New Zealand itineraries, which includes the 10-day 'Classics of New Zealand', and start planning your clients next adventure today - [CLICK HERE](#).

## Trains and tours in Italy

**ITALY** beckons with a tapestry of allure, and rail travel unveils its splendour like no other.

Railbookers' expansive rail portfolio network connects every corner, whisking travellers from Venice's canals to Rome's ancient monuments in a heartbeat.

Dive into the coastal wonders of the Cinque Terre and the Amalfi Coast, easily accessible via scenic rail routes.

Curated packages blend iconic sights with hidden gems.

Travellers can delve into the heart of **Venice, Florence and Rome** on Ultimate Adventure, or indulge in culinary delights on a journey through Italy's gastronomic capitals.

Clients can seek tranquillity on the shores of Lake Como or extend their cruise vacation with Railbookers' vast selection of 'pre and post cruise' itineraries.

Exploring Europe via rail will allow agents' clients to enjoy the entirety of the holiday.



## Save on popular journeys

**ELEVATE** travel with Railbookers' Limited Time offer and save up to \$800 per couple on its **Most Popular Holidays**.

Railbookers makes it easy with a variety of resources on hand to assist when choosing from

hundreds of carefully curated itineraries.

Select from any of their social media assets, maps, brochures, training webinars and gain access to exclusive deals to help curate your clients' bucket-list holiday.

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## TravelManagers gathers advisors across Australia

**TRAVELMANAGERS'** twice-yearly round of state meetings has just concluded in Melbourne, Brisbane, Sydney, Adelaide and Perth, with personal travel managers (PTMs) travelling from far and wide to take part. Presentations from TravelManagers' National Partnership Office (NPO) and Business Partnership Managers (BPMs) covered everything from systems and technology to workshops on working smarter and how to run a successful expo, while participating partner suppliers shared the latest updates on destinations and experiences. Find out more about TravelManagers [HERE](#).

**SYDNEY'S** Radisson Blu Plaza welcomed PTMs from throughout New South Wales and ACT.



**SHEENA** Smith, NCL Cruises (third from right), with the winners of her NCL quiz (L-R): Vic PTMs Kylie Crosbie; Jacinta Anderson; Ed Bradford; Luky Wilson; and Kristy Fitzpatrick.



**JOE** Araullo, CEO of House of Travel with Victorian PTM Annette Dal Sasso and Jeff Leckey, General Manager Cruise Australasia - House of Travel.



**VIC** PTMs Lisa King; Nicole Gardner; Kristy Fitzpatrick, BPM Despina Madden; and PTMs Nicole Ginger; and Sharon Wright.



**QLD** PTMs Rose Febo and Zora Abbott.



**BPM** NSW/ACT Penny Toon with PTM Penny Neophytou.



**SA** PTMs Carolyn Johnston; Prudence Thomson; and Lucrezia Caruso.



**QLD** PTMs Tamara Tiffin, Amanda Brady and Lisa Smith.



**WA** PTMs Linda Naake; Leanne Johnston; Vikki Southern; and Kelly Savka.



**SA** PTM Michelle Zienkiewicz; Tim Smith, Room Res; PTM Belinda Woodroofe; Michael Gazal, TravelManagers' General Manager; Kellie Smith, Room Res; and PTM Carolyn Johnston.



**WA** PTM Tanya Nielsen; Emma Newton, Wendy Wu Tours; Susie Morelli, Thai Airways; and PTM Joy Tepnimit.



## TRAVEL BRANDS ACCUSED OF COMPLICITY IN CRUELTY

**FIVE** international travel companies have been allegedly linked with complicity in unethical dolphin hunts, according to a damning new report compiled by World Animal Protection.

Trip.com, Klook, Traveloka, GetYourGuide and Groupon have all had the accusation levelled at them, with the report suggesting the online companies sell tickets to tourism attractions that have sourced dolphins from the Taiji dolphin hunt in Japan.

It also revealed that 107 entertainment venues across 17 countries are connected to Taiji hunts, with World Animal Protection now calling on the companies to implement animal welfare policies and to cease the promotion of venues that are sourcing the marine animals.

No Australian and New Zealand operators were found to be

involved, but countries often frequented by tourists have been found to have Taiji dolphins in their venues.

These include attractions based in Thailand, Vietnam, Mexico and the Philippines.

“Based on the disastrous animal welfare impacts, and absolute brutality involved in these hunts, it is completely indefensible for global travel companies to continue sending unsuspecting travellers to venues who have sourced dolphins from Taiji,” World Animal Protection Australia and NZ Head of Campaigns, Suzanne Milthorpe, said.

“This is corporate irresponsibility at its finest.

“As long as travel companies continue to sell tickets to dolphin entertainment venues, they are directly contributing to the suffering of these intelligent



marine mammals.”

World Animal Protection also found that 79% of tourists would prefer to see dolphins in the wild rather than captivity.

Four in five travellers also believe that companies should not be selling activities that cause suffering to wild animals.

On the other side of the ledger, the report also called out Airbnb, Booking.com, Tripadvisor, and

Virgin Australia as industry-leading for their progressive animal welfare policies.

The Taiji drive hunt is based on driving dolphins and other small cetaceans into a small bay where they are killed or captured for their meat and for sale to bidders around the world.

**Travel Daily** has reached out to Trip.com, Klook and Traveloka for comment about the report. *JHM*

## Air Canada partners with world-famous chimpanzee expert for Earth Month campaign

**AS PART** of its long-standing partnership with the Jane Goodall Institute of Canada, Air Canada has unveiled a new initiative to highlight illegal wildlife trade (IWT) and its impact on global diversity.

The campaign, which will feature a special message from Dr Jane Goodall (**pictured**), will showcase animals endangered from IWT on the airline’s in-flight entertainment welcome screens,

social media and more during Earth Month this Apr.

“At Air Canada, our belief is while much of what we do to reduce our environmental footprint is about leaving less, we also need to do more to improve our planet’s fragile ecosystems,” said the carrier’s Head of Investor Relations and Corporate Sustainability, Valerie Durand.

“To further support this important work, all Aeroplan

points donated to The Jane Goodall Institute of Canada for one week following Earth Day will be matched by Aeroplan.”

Additionally, the Canadian flag carrier will mark Dr Goodall’s 90th birthday by supporting her upcoming celebratory tour across Canada, which aims to inspire the next generation of environmental stewards.

Air Canada became the first airline in the Americas to attain



the IATA IWT certification, which confirms policies and procedures are in place to reduce the likelihood of the transportation of illegal wildlife products. *JM*



## #TRAVELINSPO

Check out which destinations are trending **HERE**

Travel & Cruise  
 Weekly

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on the latest travel news

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## MONEY

**WELCOME** to Money, TD's Tue feature on what the Australian dollar is doing.

### AU\$1 = US\$0.660

**THE** Australian dollar broke its three-day winning streak at the end of last week following the release of mixed domestic economy numbers, including stagnant final retail sales and downward trending trade balance data.

The AUD/USD pair was buoyed, however thanks to downward pressure on the US dollar due to a weaker labour market data.

*Wholesale rates this morning.*

US	\$0.660
UK	£0.522
NZ	\$1.093
Euro	€0.608
Japan	¥100.3
Thailand	฿24.22
China	¥4.775
South Africa	12.31
Canada	\$0.896
Crude oil	US\$86.91

## QF's surprise sale

**QANTAS** has released over one million discounted seats on more than 60 destinations around Australia, available for 72 hours.

Travellers can secure cheaper economy fares for flights between May and Dec, with more than 30 routes on sale for under \$105 one way until 11.59pm AEST 11 Apr, unless sold out prior.

The surprise sale comes off the back of the launch of Qantas Frequent Flyer's new Class Plus reward seat (**TD** yesterday).

## Rottnest speeds things up



**ROTTNEST** Fast Ferries' new vessel is currently taking shape at Austal Philippines, and is expected to begin sailing the popular Perth to Rottnest Island route in Dec, just in time for Western Australia's peak tourist season (**TD** 23 Jan).

Designed by Incat Crowther, the new 32-metre passenger ferry (render **pictured**) will cater for up to 400 passengers and five crew seated over three decks.

It will also offer a large bar and kiosk area, an open-air sun deck, five bathrooms, and an abundance of cargo and luggage space for passengers, including bicycle storage areas on the main and mid decks.

"Incat Crowther has paid close attention to the operational details that are required to deliver an exceptional passenger experience on our iconic Perth to Rottnest Island route," Rottnest Fast Ferries Directors, Luke Crispin and James Mulholland, said in a joint statement.

"Incat Crowther's team has supported us every step of the way through the shipbuilding process, and we are very

confident that the new vessel will deliver a world-class customer experience for our passengers."

With an operating speed of 25 knots thanks to its two diesel engines, the aluminium catamaran will complete the nearly 30km journey from Hillarys Boat Harbour in Perth to Rottnest Island in 45 minutes.

The ferry, which is yet to be named, will replace *MV Seafyfe*, which has been operating for nearly 30 years, servicing four million visitors to Rottnest over 30,000 journeys.

Incat Crowther's Technical Manager, Dan Mace, said, "Incat Crowther is pleased to collaborate with Rottnest Fast Ferries in the development and delivery of this next-generation vessel following the success of the existing Incat Crowther-designed *Harbour Master* on on the Perth-Rottnest Island route".

The tourist vessel's upcoming debut is ideally timed, with the island having just received enhanced visitor amenities at the West End entry point (**TD** 11 Mar), plus upgraded accommodation to come. *JM*

## Window Seat

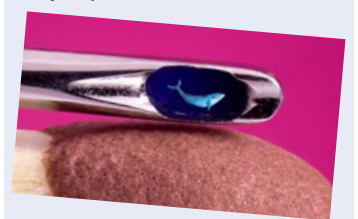
**THOSE** not so keen on getting up close and personal with life-sized wild animals now have a much safer option.

The exhibition of tiny animals created by the UK's most famous microscopic artist, David Lindon, has plenty of visitors lining up in very teeny, tiny queues, as people clamber to catch a glimpse of animal sculptures no larger than the head of a pin.



Touted as the World's Smallest Zoo, the exhibition does come with some very, very fine print, including that none of the exhibits can be viewed with the naked eye.

Yes, guests of the event need to commandeer a special magnifier to take in the full majesty of Lindon's creations.



While some may be quick to point out that real animals provide a much larger thrill, we can't argue with the safety benefits of such a microscopic zoo - when the animals of this attraction attack, it will surely be no worse than a flea bite?



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