

## Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today features six pages of news including our Corporate Update.

## Industrial action off

**AVIATION** firefighters will no longer go on strike next week after an agreement was reached with employer Airservices Australia about a range of expressed safety concerns.

United Firefighters Union Australia members had previously voted in favour of protected industrial action (**TD 22 Mar**), threatening school holiday travel.

## APT Outback Sale

**APT** Travel Group is celebrating 60 years of exploring the Outback by giving travellers the opportunity to save thousands on select tours departing this year.

To make a booking for the Outback Sale, travellers can select an APT Australia tour of nine days or more departing in 2024, saving an additional \$2,000 per couple off the standard price.

APT was founded by Bill McGeary in 1927, when the business first began as a suburban school bus service in Melbourne, evolving over time to host busloads of students for adventures to the outback.

Since those humble beginnings, APT continues to take travellers on adventures, whether it's high-end glamping at the Mitchell Falls Wilderness Lodge in the Kimberley or scenic flights over Lake Eyre in South Australia.

## Rising costs cutting into holiday spend

**COST-OF-LIVING** pressures will see Aussies travel closer to home this school holidays break, a new report from Tourism & Transport Forum (TTF) Australia has found.

The national survey of 1,500 Australians indicated that 41% of respondents are holidaying within their own state between 29 Mar and 29 Apr, rising from 36% during summer.

TTF also found 21% of Aussies will holiday interstate, while only 8% are heading overseas.

More than half of Australians said increasing household costs had impacted their travel plans, with most holidaying for seven days or fewer and planning to spend less than \$2,000.

The most popular overseas destinations this school holidays are Europe, followed by New Zealand, Indonesia, Japan, and the United States.

The most popular states to visit



are NSW (33%), followed by Vic (25%), Qld (24%) & WA (7%).

TTF CEO, Margy Osmond, said Australia needed to take note of the latest trend to tighten the belt on holiday spending.

"We're concerned the sector is still feeling the impact of cost-of-living pressures with many families taking shorter holidays than originally planned, staying with friends or relatives to save money or recently cancelling their travel plans altogether," she said.

"Australians ranked travel and holidays as their top priority when it comes to non-essential spending, showing just how vital it is to take a break with family or friends," Osmond added.

Meanwhile, the most popular regional areas to travel to this school holidays include the Gold Coast (7%), the Sunshine Coast (6%), NSW's South Coast and VIC's Great Ocean Rd (5% each), the Blue Mountains (3.5%), & the Mornington Peninsula (3%). **AB**

## QF inks in-flight deal

**QANTAS** Project Sunrise A350s are set to be installed with Panasonic Astrova IFE technology to provide passengers with their in-flight entertainment systems.

Panasonic won the contract after pledging it would deliver cinema grade picture quality, high fidelity audio, and enough power to fast-charge all passenger devices through the longer flights.

OLED 4K screen and full cabin Bluetooth capability to connect with wireless headphones are some of the benefits of the deal.

## Oceania shows Exotic side

**OCEANIA** Cruises has unveiled its 2025-2026 'Tropics and Exotics Collection', which will open for bookings on 18 Apr.

The new batch of sailings include 135 itineraries, visiting five continents - including Australia - on voyages ranging from seven to 180 days.

More than 90 sailings feature overnight stays, offering passengers the chance to immerse themselves in ports such as Panama City, Bali, Curacao; San

Juan, Puerto Rico, Melbourne and Port Louis.

Highlights of the upcoming exotic collection include 11- to 30-day cruises in the waters of Africa, with *Nautica* voyages focusing on culture and nature.

Also on offer are 10-24 sailings in South America aboard *Marina*, exploring "the best of Brazil, the Amazon and beyond".

The full list of voyages are available to preview on [OceaniaCruises.com](https://www.oceaniacruises.com). **AB**



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## 1,500 guns seized

**THE** Transportation Security Administration (TSA) in the United States has seized more than 1,500 guns at airports around the country during the first quarter of 2024.

The alarming rate of confiscation equates to 16 guns removed from flights every day.

## Women in aviation

**THE** Federal Government has opened the tender for \$2.9 million in funding to support women and girls in aviation, flagged by **TD** in Mar (**TD 12 Mar**).

The department is now on the hunt for experienced suppliers to pitch activities and initiatives that will impact emerging female talent within the industry as well as younger generations considering their career options.

The aim is to attract, train and retain women in an inclusive and respectful environment.

These projects may include awareness or upskilling programs and will focus on working with industry leaders to make an impact and drive change; increase visibility of the aviation industry and the opportunities it offers females and strengthen networks in the industry to drive innovation and share learning.

Interested suppliers should review the material now available on AusTender and put in their bids by 08 May.



## NZ seeks to win back Aussies this year

**NEW** Zealand is donning its goggles and preparing to ollie up the list of most attractive travel destinations with Aussies through a new winter season campaign.

Historically, New Zealand has been the top outbound market for Australian travellers, but top billing over the last year has been dominated by Indonesia.

Last year, Indonesia enjoyed 1.37 million Aussie travellers, ahead of our trans-Tasman neighbour with 1.26 million, but Tourism New Zealand is hoping to change that trend starting with its popular winter ski season.

The latest 'New Ski-Land' campaign encourages Australians to hit the slopes and explore the country's lesser known regions.

Tourism New Zealand General Manager, Andrew Waddell, said that while Aussie travellers are familiar with Kiwi culture, they may not know that it really "comes to life" during winter.

"A lot of Australians don't know that so we want to showcase it as a winter playground," he said.

Central to the marketing push will be ski fields located near Queenstown, Wanaka, Methven and Ohakune, as well as whale-watching in Kaikoura, mountain-biking in Canterbury and hot pools across the country.

NZ Tourism Minister, Matt Doocey, admitted he was not fully aware of New Zealand's slide down Australia's outbound rankings, however he is confident that a renewed focus on non-summer travel would bear fruit.

"It should be about smoothing out the peaks and troughs," the Minister told AAP.

"It's better for operators



maintaining their staff, and also a good use of their assets and resources across the 12 months.

"You'll see it through Tourism New Zealand ensuring that our offshore marketing campaigns are also focusing on shoulder and off-peak seasons," he added.

Recent Tourism New Zealand data showed there are currently 3.9 million Australians "actively considering" a trip across the Tasman, with overall arrival numbers in Jan recovering to 79% of pre-COVID levels after a sluggish start.

Tourism is now the second largest export in NZ, directly and indirectly employing 317,514 New Zealanders with international visitors contributing NZ\$10.8 billion to its economy.

**MEANWHILE**, DFAT has advised Aussie travellers that heavy rain is impacting much of the South Island and parts of the North Island, including Westland and Southland.

Travellers are advised to monitor the NZ Metservice for the latest information and follow the advice of local authorities. **AB**

## NCL cancellations

**NORWEGIAN** Cruise Line (NCL) has been forced to cancel more than a dozen cruises next year due to a combination of rising geopolitical conflict near the Red Sea & revised dry dock schedules.

The scrapped voyages impact seven of its ships and include the following itinerary dates in 2025: *Norwegian Epic*, 20 Feb/01 Nov/11 Nov; *Norwegian Jade*, 04 Mar/13 Mar/24 Mar; *Norwegian Pearl*, 19 Apr/05 May/16 May/15 Oct; *Norwegian Sky*, 27 May/05 Jun; *Norwegian Spirit*, 01 Jan/17 May; *Norwegian Star*, 18 May/29 May/09 Jun; and *Norwegian Viva*, 27 May/20 Sep/29 Sep.

A full ship charter and the need to accommodate increasing demand for shorter, close-to-home voyages to the Bahamas were also listed as reasons behind the shifting departure schedules.

Affected guests will receive a full refund and a 10% discount in the form of a future cruise credit towards any sailing departing before 31 Dec 2025, a spokesperson for NCL said.



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## WSI business hub cleared for take-off

AN UPCOMING business precinct at Western Sydney International Airport (WSI) has taxied for takeoff this week, with construction officially commencing yesterday with the first turning of the sod.

While the build of the business hub has only just begun, plans have been underway for some time, with WSI establishing a 50/50 joint-venture partnership with Australian property group Charter Hall Group to deliver the first stage of the project.

WSI CEO, Simon Hickey, said stage one alone is expected to generate 400 jobs, with another 2,000 permanent jobs anticipated once the business centre is fully occupied and up and running.

“WSI is the engine room for growth and development across the region that’s attracting billions of dollars of investment and generating thousands of training and job opportunities,”



Hickey said.

“This is an exciting time for all kinds of businesses to join our new business precinct that’s geared to grow and evolve over time as the airport builds to ultimately become Sydney’s biggest international gateway.

“We’ll be getting on with the job of building the precinct over the coming months, with the first phase of works due for completion by the end of next year - at which point extensive

testing of the airport will be underway as we prepare to welcome passengers and airlines in late 2026,” he added.

Upon its completion, the 20-hectare, mixed-use development will include a large modern warehouse space, ancillary offices, a 150-room hotel (render **pictured**) that will service flight crews, a service station and convenience retail, including food and beverage outlets, as well as gym and conference facilities. AB

## Qatar, Oui to Paris

QATAR Airways and Visit Qatar is giving Australian travel agents the opportunity to win the ultimate Paris experience through a new trade sales incentive.

Up for grabs are return economy class flights, four nights’ accommodation, an exciting Ligue 1 Champions, Paris Saint-Germain match experience and a fabulous one-night Discover Qatar stopover.

To qualify, agents must book a Qatar Airways ticket departing from Australia between now and 30 Sep 2024.

Submissions end on 31 May at 11.59pm and tickets must be issued on 157 paper.

Multiple entries are permitted.



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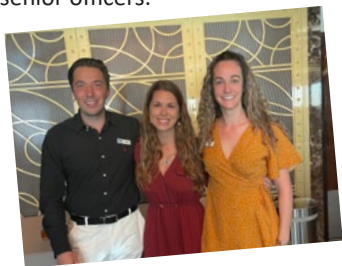
## Agents receive Royal treatment



**PRINCESS** Cruises recently hosted its first-ever Travel Agent and Trade Marketing Seacation aboard *Royal Princess*.

The two-night sailing was enjoyed by travel agents, marketers, product, and training staff, who were given guided tours of the ship and learnt about recent travel trends during a detailed information session.

Guests were also treated to a special farewell function with Captain Andrea Spinardi and senior officers.



"There's no better way for the trade to experience the Princess brand than cruising aboard one of our ships," said Nick Ferguson, Princess' Senior Director of Sales, Marketing and Customer Service.

"This two-day experience enabled travel agents and marketers to truly understand the product they're selling, meet our phenomenal crew and witness their exceptional service levels."

"Also, many agents and trade partners who sailed with us were experiencing a cruise for the very first time - which we were thrilled

to facilitate," he added. *JM*

**Pictured:** Guests meeting the *Royal Princess* crew, including Captain Andrea Spinardi; **inset:** Julian De Carlo, Princess; Chlorissa Devries, Travellers Choice; and Heather Pryde, Princess.

## NSW funds SAF push

**WHILE** Australia has been slow to get behind the local production of sustainable aviation fuel (SAF), NSW has allocated \$100 million to help expedite manufacturing.

Production and use of the greener fuel source is still in its infancy globally, but Australia is looked upon as a potential major player in the space with its extensive agricultural sector.

This week, the NSW Govt has released a *Sustainable Aviation Fuel Investment Prospectus*, which outlined in detail the state's potential in leading the SAF industry in Australia.

"The development of this new SAF industry has the potential to generate a huge economic boost for some of the state's major regions...where there are large volumes of feedstock available," NSW Minister for Regional NSW Tara Moriarty said.

While only a small fraction of airlines are using SAF, the energy source is viewed as the quickest way for the aviation sector to decarbonise to net zero by 2050.

## COLLETTE'S SICILY CONFERENCE AND FAMIL



**COLLETTE** has just wound up its Global Sales Conference in Cefalu, Sicily. The 100 staff global sales team led by Christian Leibl-Cote, met in Taormina spending the last week getting to understand the magic of the island.

The team experienced the elegance of Taormina, hiked Mt Etna, tasted the magnificent Mt Etna wines, enjoyed the street food of Palermo (the spleen sandwich wasn't for everyone) and admired the beauty of Cefalu.

Sicily is one of the most popular destinations for Australians travelling with Collette, and the team now know firsthand the beauty and the benefits of travelling with the operator's tour managers.

Sicily was also home to some very special team celebrations recognising the incredible success the brand has had in recent years.

Newly appointed Managing Director Australia, Karen Deveson said "I feel extremely lucky to be part of a ground swell.

"Collette's growth in Australia is incredible, being here face to face with the Product Designers for Italy and Sicily, I can see firsthand the innovation and care that goes into a Collette trip."

Deveson added, "Touring has changed so much and I'm loving the pace and the freedom.

"I'll be back to do the Small Group Sicily itinerary and its Isles as soon as I can."

**Check out the Small Group itinerary of "Sicily and Its Isles" [HERE](#).**

**Pictured top:** Christian Leibl-Cote (Executive Vice President, Global Sales), Amanda McCann Wilson (Director of Commercial Partnerships, Australia), Karen Deveson (Managing Director, Australia), David Farrar (Head of Sales, Australia)

**Middle:** Jenni Carey, Kjirsten Trundle, Karen Deveson, Suzanne Clements

**Bottom:** Linda Seiersen, Darren Sinclair, David Farrar, Kjirsten Trundle, Jenni Carey, Samantha Tamba, Suzanne Clements, Karen Deveson, Jacquie Roberts, Amanda McCann Wilson



**Famil IN FOCUS** is our feature showcasing some of the photos from recent industry famils. If you want your famil to be featured, email [advertising@traveldaily.com.au](mailto:advertising@traveldaily.com.au).

**CORPORATE UPDATE**



# TAG eyes purchases after equity boost

**ENTERTAINMENT** and corporate travel services provider TAG has this week been bolstered by a major equity injection from a mid-market private equity firm.

ECI Partners' undisclosed investment in TAG marks a transition away from previous equity partner Apiary Capital, which saw the firm walk away with a 400% return on its initial equity purchase in 2018.

The B2B travel specialist added that with the latest investment backing, the company is poised to continue its strong acquisition momentum moving forward.

Between 2018 and this year, TAG has successfully completed eight purchases, and is bullish about making more soon.

In Sep last year, TAG acquired CCM Travel, one of Sydney's leading conference and incentive agencies (**TD 28 Sep 2023**), as well as two major purchases in New Zealand earlier this year.



In Feb, TAG bought the Kiwi business, Red Hot Travel and Events (**TD 14 Feb**), and the month before that purchased entertainment specialist Sound Travels (**TD 16 Jan**).

Speaking about TAG's latest equity boost, CEO Jens Penny (**pictured**) said the confidence provided by the capital will see the business continue to evolve its corporate travel services offering to meet the changing

needs of clients.

"With our entertainment and corporate clientele and the incredible TAG team, we are very confident that this partnership will deliver a host of new benefits and opportunities as we're poised to elevate our standards even further...and shape the future of entertainment and high-end corporate travel management," Penny said.

"We would like to thank Mark, Jess, Nicki and the team at Apiary for their support and commitment over the past six years and we look forward to the journey ahead and growth with ECI as our new partner."

ECI Partner, George Moss, added that with his firm's latest investment in TAG, he was hopeful the cash injection will "propel this global leader to new heights in the global entertainment and corporate travel markets". *AB*



**A TRAVELLER** has confessed online how she took "petty revenge" on a fellow plane passenger who kept "violating her privacy".

The unnamed flyer, who was sitting in a window seat, told Reddit users how the passenger next to her continuously reached over her to put the window shade down without asking, despite it being a short midday flight.

The passenger said "she never asked me, just reached directly in front of me to close the shade."

"I would immediately reopen it, and a few minutes later she would reach in front of me again to close it."

In response, the Reddit user said she turned on the reading light and positioned her hands so that her watch would reflect the light directly into the offending flyer's eyes.

The pettiness continued after they disembarked the plane, with the unhappy poster saying she "flipped her off the entire way to my ride".

Justifying her punitive actions, the woman said there was "absolutely no excuse for violating my personal space multiple times without asking me or acknowledging me or treating me like a human in any way".

## Biz drives DL profits

**DELTA** Air Lines' better-than-expected Q1 profit result was driven by a strong increase in corporate travel, the airline confirmed during a financial update following the results.

"We are seeing business travel picking up again," DL CEO Ed Bastian said.

"That's the reason we were able to generate the profit...that higher level of business demand is very healthy in terms of filling in short-term travel gaps".

## Aussies double the average

**AUSTRALIAN** business travellers are spending close to double the global average of nights away on work trips, Flight Centre Travel Group's (FCTG) Corporate Traveller has revealed.

The internal report showed 'bleisure' has reached a new peak of six nights, contrasting with global average of 3.5 nights.

Figures from the Global Business Travel Association also revealed more than six out of 10

travellers globally are blending business and travel more than they did in 2019, with 79% of business travellers choosing to stay at the same accommodation for both work and play.

"Prior to the pandemic, mixing business with pleasure while away for work was a real luxury and not necessarily the done thing, but that has all changed in the last couple of years," Corporate Traveller said.



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**Sydney Airport** is offering a last chance school holiday special, with those who book now able to save 20% on all parking. The saving is available for both domestic and international passengers, using the promo code "APRIL24", for those booking by 16 Apr and entering the parking lot by 30 Jun - book now [HERE](#).

**Railbookers'** worldwide rail sale is ending soon, with up to \$800 off, plus savings of an additional \$600 per couple on select luxury packages of more than seven nights. View all flash sale deals [HERE](#).

**China Airlines'** 'Sydney to the World' autumn sale offers exclusive specials to popular destinations in Thailand, Vietnam, Japan, and the United Kingdom. The sale starts at \$866, with discounts including business class, premium economy, and economy. The sale runs until Sun week, 21 Apr - visit [china-airlines.com](http://china-airlines.com).

**Wendy Wu Tours'** China 'fly free frenzy' is on now, with those who book until 30 Apr able to access a \$99 per person deposit. The fly free offer is available on a number of selected tours, while a "partner flies free" offer is extended to most China tours. There is also a "solos save 50% on airfares" offer, which applies to most itineraries. The sale is exclusive to eligible new bookings - call 1300 727 998.

A special offer for Australians is available on a walking tour in England with **On Foot Holidays**. Those who book by the end of Aug will receive free dinner at The Rock Inn, where hikers spend one of the nights during the walk. [CLICK HERE](#) to view the walk, and quote "ROCK30".

Save an additional 5% on suite bookings to elevate your experience onboard an all inclusive **HX Journey** to Antarctica, Arctic, Alaska and beyond. Book before 30 Apr at 1300 159 127 to access the offer.

**APT's** Outback Sale is now on, celebrating 60 years of exploring the Australian Outback. Those booking a select APT Australia tour of nine days or more departing later this year can take an additional \$2,000 per couple off the website price. Call an APT consultant on 1300 336 932 to secure a deal.

New Caledonia is on sale with **Aircalin**, with direct flights from Sydney to Noumea from only \$529 return, and from Brisbane or Melbourne from only \$579 return. The fares will be available for sale until the 25 Apr, for travel up to Dec. Contact [chris.thistlethwaite@aircalin.com.au](mailto:chris.thistlethwaite@aircalin.com.au) for more information.

**IHG Hotels & Resorts** is this week rewarding its valued highly guests with up to 20% off stays over three nights, including complimentary daily breakfast. The "Stay Longer, Pay Less" resort offer is available at almost 90 properties across Australia, New Zealand, Fiji, French Polynesia, Japan, and Southeast Asia. [CLICK HERE](#) to view the full terms and conditions.

## Cheering in Hong Kong



**THE** Hong Kong Tourism Board partnered with Cathay Pacific to host travel trade partners on a family trip to witness the Hong Kong Sevens rugby tournament.

The whirlwind getaway also gave participants the opportunity to explore the city, including checking out the newly revitalised Temple Street Night Market, sampling dim sums in Tai Kwun, and embarking on a foodie tour through Sham Shui Po. *JM*

**Pictured:** Amanda Bruno, Wendy Wu Tours; Jodie Collins, Luxury Escapes; Michelle Ryan, My Travel Group; Lisa Lee, HKTB; Neil Robertson, MTA Travel; Quynh Giang, Express Travel Group; and Elliott Finley, Cathay Pacific.

## Parrtjima returns

**THE** Northern Territory's popular 'Parrtjima - A Festival in Light' returns today for 10 nights of new illuminations, artworks, talks, music and markets in Alice Springs Desert Park.

The free event celebrates First Nations culture, and includes a new theatrical experience as well as a three-night marketplace with local products (**TD** 18 Mar).

## Reef citizen science

**A NEW** range of daily citizen science tours have launched on the Great Barrier Reef from Passions of Paradise.

According to the travel operator, demand for citizen science options has been on the rise, and now Passions of Paradise has extended its Marine Biologist for a Day program, which first launched in 2021.

Through the program, certified divers can help monitor coral planting with the Passions crew, who have planted 9,000 corals on Hastings Reef off Cairns.

They will also complete Eye on the Reef sightings and Rapid Monitoring Reports, which are logged with the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority to help manage the reef.

"Our passengers have been choosing to visit the Great Barrier Reef with Passions of Paradise so they can indirectly support our reef stewardship activities, and many have been wanting to go that step further and actively participate in an activity to help the reef's health," said Passions of Paradise CEO Scotty Garden.