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Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today features six pages of travel industry news, plus full pages from:

- Titan Travel
- Eva Airways

Nine sailings axed

PRINCESS Cruises and ship builder Fincantieri have mutually agreed to postpone the delivery of the line's next Sphere Class ship, *Star Princess* - resulting in the cancellation of nine sailings.

The adjusted delivery time has been pushed out from 29 Jul 2025 to 26 Sep 2025, with no specific reason for the hold-up noted in the Princess update.

Guests who rebook will receive future cruise and onboard credits depending on the replacement cruise selection, while customers also have the option of choosing to cancel and receive a full refund of the cruise fare.

Princess Cruises said it will protect travel agent commissions on all bookings paid in full.

Aussies cut travel budget

AUSTRALIANS have saved \$528 a month from cancelled, postponed or "slimmed down" travel in the first quarter of 2024, according to NAB's latest *Consumer Sentiment Survey*.

The shredding of the travel budget is up by 39% on the same period last year, with the lion's share of funds being diverted to cover everyday expenses such as paying down mortgages.

As a result, the report suggested European summer travel, overseas weddings and lavish interstate trips are now less likely to take place this year, as many Aussies look to bolster savings and make more budget bookings.

NAB believes that changes to travel plans have been made by around 45% of Aussies in the first three months of this year alone, with a cohort of youth-focused travel experiences likely to be hit the hardest by the country-wide belt-tightening.

Millennials have taken the



largest knife to the travel budget in 2024, slicing away \$743 a month to cover other costs.

This was followed by \$645 a month for people aged between 50 and 64, \$440 for 65+, but in a welcome reprieve for the youth market, only \$329 for Gen Z.

Looking ahead, the study also predicted that one in four Australians are likely to reduce spend on travel in the next 12 months across both international and domestic trips.

"For some it might mean switching the Amalfi Coast for the Sunshine Coast, for others swapping an interstate break for a city staycation," NAB Executive, Paul Riley, said.

"This is another example of the 'loud budgeting' trend we have seen emerge over recent months, where people are feeling more comfortable setting budget boundaries and telling friends and family," he added. AB

Discover Taiwan

TAIWAN is riding a wave as one of Asia's trendiest destinations, with agents able to engage with some of the country's best dining options & festivals - see how Eva Air can get you there on p8.

Air NZ downgrades

AIR New Zealand has been forced to downgrade its full-year 2024 financial guidance once again, with the carrier citing a continued softening of the market and rising costs as key factors.

Earnings before tax will now be in the range of NZ\$190-230m, dropping from NZ\$200-240m.

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Travel Daily
ON LOCATION

GIBRALTAR

Today's issue of *TD* is coming to you from southern Spain as *Sun Princess* continues its relentless march to its naming ceremony in Barcelona.

NOBODY really knows how the famous Barbary apes of Gibraltar made their way to the island, but they're now among its most famous residents.

One rumour is that the tail-less creatures swam across the Strait of Gibraltar from northern Africa, or even made their way via secret underground tunnels.

However they got there, the creatures have been a popular staple living high on 'The Rock of Gibraltar' for centuries and are visited by tourists each day.

They're not hard to find either, freely moving about the trees but also casually wandering the paths and even swinging their way along walls and staircases used by their daily visitors.

Tourists are warned not to present any hint of food, even inside a plastic bag, as the apes have been known to snatch and search any potential source.

For the most part though, the apes are docile and placid enough to wander past safely, happily sitting for photos before impulsively bounding through the trees in search of any visitor naive enough to unwrap a snack.

Thompson takes charge



INTREPID Travel veteran Yvette Thompson will shift to a newly-created role on 01 May to cater for the strong growth the operator is currently experiencing in the local market.

Thompson is taking on the position of General Manager Sales and Marketing ANZ, moving across from her previous remit heading up Intrepid's sales and partnerships strategy.

Reflecting on her promotion, the experienced travel executive said she is looking forward to helping guide Intrepid to hitting its ambitious sales targets.

"I'm thrilled to embark on this new role within the sales and marketing team to help strategically grow the ANZ region," Thompson enthused.

"While I have absolutely loved my time leading the ANZ partnerships team, I am looking forward to widening my scope of impact and to helping the business achieve our ambitious 2030 goals," she added.

Thompson has racked up 15 years with Intrepid across two stints, including a four-year tenure as Industry Sales Manager - Australia & New Zealand.

Part of Intrepid's global objectives to be achieved by 2030 include doubling its global customer base to 600,000, raising revenue to \$1.3 billion, and contributing at least 1% of revenue to 'purpose' initiatives.

Intrepid is now recruiting for a replacement Head of Sales & Partnerships ANZ. *AB*

TM clarification

TRAVELMANAGERS has over \$1 million of funds available in its customer protection scheme, and has not paid out the above figure, as was stated in *TD* on Fri.

Titanic discounts

TITAN Travel is offering savings of up to \$1,250pp on all 2024 and 2025 tours priced above \$1,700. See **page seven** for details.

Hello there, Anne

CUNARD now officially has a quartet of ships in its fleet, with *Queen Anne* joining during a handover ceremony in Italy.

The 14-deck, 3,000-passenger vessel has set now sail for Southampton ahead of her seven-night maiden voyage to Lisbon on 03 May.

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Bonza denies reports

SWIRLING media reports suggesting Bonza is facing an existential crisis have been refuted by the carrier.

A report in the *AFR* late last week suggested Bonza's financial backers had enlisted advisory KordaMentha to provide advice about the ongoing operations of the Aussie budget carrier.

But when contacted by *Travel Daily* over the weekend, a spokesperson for Bonza denied neither Bonza or its investor, 777 Partners, had appointed KordaMentha as financial advisors, or in any other capacity.

Unnamed sources told the *AFR* that A-Cap, a New York insurance group, had provided a debt facility to 777 Partners, which had now been withdrawn.

A-Cap was reportedly directed by the Bermuda Monetary Authority to cease financing to the airline because of "complications" arising from its investment in 777.

Gendle to retire at the end of 2024

GLOBAL Touring's General Manager Global Sales, David Gendle, will retire at the end of 2024 after a 35-year career in the travel industry.

Global Touring Managing Director, Ed Pettitt, said Gendle had been "instrumental" in the company's sales success over the last six years, adding the business would not be in the position it is without his efforts.

The announcement was made alongside a wider restructure of the business, which will see experienced travel/tourism marketing specialist Anna Fawcett (pictured) rejoin this week.

Previously employed at the touring company as Global Head of Marketing between Aug 2018 and Aug 2020, Fawcett has returned in the role of General Manager APAC, where she will manage the high-profile Topdeck Travel and Back-Roads brands.

Well-known travel executive



Dylan Hearne has also exited, after holding the Head of Sales role for almost six years.

For the interim, David Gendle has stepped into Hearne's former role, where he will drive trade sales growth and oversee Global Touring's expanding sales team.

Under the shake-up, Fawcett will focus on enhancing B2B sales channels and customer service, with one of the central pillars

being to ensure Global Touring's brands are more easily accessible for travel agents.

"Anna is a pioneer who achieved phenomenal things for Topdeck Travel and will add a new layer of strategic thinking to both our brands," Pettitt said.

"Her new role here, as part of our global executive leadership team, will be pivotal in our advancement plans for both Topdeck Travel and Back-Roads Touring," he added.

Fawcett said that nurturing existing trade partnerships and uncovering new opportunities will be a major part of her focus.

"My core focuses will be sales and customer service, working more closely with the travel trade, and seeking out new distribution channels for the brands," she explained.

"This is such an exciting time of expansion on many levels and I am thrilled to be part of it." AB



Adventure to the world's WILD PLACES

We invite you to join our live webinar on 29 April 24, at 3pm AEST to hear more about immersive, responsible adventures on our purpose-built small ships. We will share our new ANTARCTICA 25/26 season, our most comprehensive and adventurous yet including our brand-new small ship, *Douglas Mawson*.

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Window Seat

GETTING stood up is sadly not uncommon during dating these days, but being ghosted after flying more than 1,600km to meet someone is on a whole other level.

That's exactly what happened to 23-year-old River Blake (pictured), who flew from Louisiana to South Dakota earlier this year to meet a man she'd been talking to online for three years.

Blake waited for four hours at the airport before realising her date wasn't going to show up - despite the fact that he had been the one to pay for her one-way flight.

Unfortunately for Blake, she had to fork out US\$1,290 for overnight accommodation and a last-minute ticket home.

The young traveller made the best of the situation, though, by meeting a mutual friend and enjoying some sight-seeing of Rapid City.



Sofitel's new Encounter



SOFITEL has presented its new campaign film, 'The Encounter', branding the hotel chain as a place "where free minds meet".

The new marketing push stars actors Gillian Anderson and Dali Benssalah, the chain's two ambassadors, and was filmed in Sofitel Mexico City Reforma.

This campaign aims to convey the concept of "cultural link", and Sofitel's values, including French zest, heartfelt service, and more.

"This video symbolises Sofitel's new positioning as a desire to create encounters between cultures, people and ideas - the very definition of Sofitel's DNA," Vice President Global Marketing Nicolas Gronier explained.

"This is an invitation to discover the local culture, to open up to others, and to live the Sofitel experience to the fullest, while remaining true to one's self at all times," he added.

CLICK HERE to discover the campaign video.

MEANWHILE, Sofitel sister brand Mercure has now opened its largest hotel on Singapore's hip Club Street (**TD** 19 Dec).

The new 989-room Mercure ICON Singapore City Centre offers stylish accommodation adorned with locally inspired touches from its position in Chinatown.

The hotel's design creates a stimulating sense of space embodying the neighbourhood's heritage-rich surrounds, beginning in its expansive lobby, with a LED mural and artworks of the iconic shophouses by local artist Ripple Root.

The property is being positioned as ideal for leisure seekers and business travellers alike, providing a "cosy retreat from Singapore's hustle and bustle", featuring rooms with floor-to-ceiling windows for maximum views. *MS*

Crimson on the road

THE team at Philippines-based Crimson Hotels & Resorts has recently wrapped up a successful trip Down Under, connecting with local industry collaborators and stakeholders.

"Australia seems to be a growing market for the Philippines, so we are happy to visit Sydney and Melbourne agents to present to them our Crimson Hotels and Resorts located in Boracay, Mactan Island in Cebu, and Manila," said Carmela Bocanegra, Sales and Marketing VP, Chroma Hospitality.

"The feedback has been interesting and promising.

"Our beautiful islands are a good option for the luxurious Australian market and we are confident that our Crimsons will be perfect for their needs."

During the tour, the team shared with the local travel industry the opportunities that lie within Filipino destinations, including Cebu and Boracay.

They also showcased Crimson's offerings, and highlighted that Crimson Mactan and Boracay were recognised by Conde Nast as Best Value Experience Spa and Best for Families in Asia Pacific for 2023-2024.

"Through this endeavour, we aim to forge lasting partnerships and create unforgettable experiences for travellers seeking luxury, comfort, authenticity and the warmth and unparalleled hospitality we are known for," said Herley Herrera-Broutin, Director of Sales and Marketing for Crimson Resort & Spa Mactan.

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EXCLUSIVE
SCENIC Luxury Cruises & Tours' Director of Discovery Operations, Jason Flesher, concedes that "everybody was waiting for us to fail" when it came to the successful deployment of its helicopters and submersibles. Speaking with *Travel Daily* aboard *Scenic Eclipse II* on Sat, Flesher revealed the ship's ability to make a full deployment of Zodiacs, helicopters and its submersible in only 15 minutes is "pretty badass".



"When we succeeded, it was a beautiful sunny day in Greenland...and now other operators are scrambling to catch up when building their ships but nobody else has both heli and subs available," Flesher explained. "So in the end we figured out how to get 12 Zodiacs out of the garage, the submersible to its dive site, kayaks to their paddle site, the Discovery team on shore, and helicopters flying with guests in just 15 minutes. "Any other operator I've worked with has taken at least 45 minutes to an hour-and-a-half... so our guests automatically get more time to explore, between

90-120 minutes per rotation." Flesher also believes the concept of discovery is a major selling point for prospective passengers on *Eclipse II* - despite its reputation for ultra luxury. "We've learned how to discover properly - both on and off the ship - so passengers can explore and also enjoy the luxury on board," he said.

EK apologises to customers

EMIRATES flight schedules have returned to normal following widespread disruptions as record rainfall smashed the UAE last week (*TD* 18 Apr). The carrier's President, Tim Clark, issued an open letter over the weekend to apologise to customers whose travel plans were disrupted, acknowledging that "our response has been far from perfect". "We...understand the frustration of our customers due to the congestion, lack of information, and confusion in the terminals."

He pointed out that EK diverted dozens of flights last Tue, during the worst of the weather event, and cancelled almost 400 flights over the next three days due to "staffing and supply shortages". He added, "it will take us some more days to clear the backlog of rebooked passengers and bags, and we ask for our customers' patience and understanding". The UAE carrier has also put together a taskforce to sort, reconcile, and deliver around 30,000 pieces of lost luggage to their owners.

Calile bags new store

LUXURY Brisbane property Calile Hotel has opened a new flagship store for on-trend travel and lifestyle brand, July. Featuring an indoor palm tree at the centre and a sleek interior, the store was inspired by photographer Slim Aarons, known for capturing glamorous images from a bygone era. July is an Australian travel brand offering customers innovative products that blend form with function. The brand was recently announced as the official partner of the Australian team for the Paris Olympics.



Khotkar jets Rex

REX has announced the immediate resignation of non-executive director, Sid Khotkar, from its Board. Khotkar, who represented the airline's convertible note investor PAG Regulus Holdings on the Board, said his departure will free up more time for him to focus on PAG's growing private equity investment portfolio in Australia. Partner and Co-Head of Private Equity at PAG, Lincoln Pan, will continue on Rex's Board as non-executive director.

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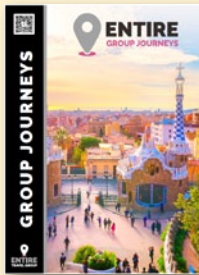
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Murray River Paddlesteamers - 2024-2026

Travellers can learn all about the onboard amenities and Murray River sailings offered by *PS Emmylou* and *PS Australian Star* via Murray River Paddlesteamers' brand-new brochure. The 28-page book details the rich history of the iconic wood-fired paddlesteamers, and what guests can expect during their journeys, from complimentary wi-fi and all meals included, to riverside dining and campfires and premium onshore guided tours. The

brochure also highlights the three-, four- and seven-night river cruises available to choose from, as well as options for travellers to extend their stay in Echuca Moama, the twin towns nestled along the Murray. Readers can take advantage of special offers detailed within the guide, including savings of \$300 per couple and included return train fares from Melbourne on select departures.



Entire Travel Group - Group Journeys 2024/25

To accommodate the incredible demand of its European group touring brochure, which has been snapped up in record time, Entire Travel Group (ETG) has completed a second print run of its for travel agents. The 84-page brochure features some of the brand's most popular group journeys at competitive rates, as well as guaranteed departures in 2024/25 across nine destinations, including Spain, Portugal, France,

Italy, Greece, Morocco, Turkey, Jordan and Egypt. The guide is designed to complement ETG's website, where readers can simply type the tour codes featured in the brochure into the online search tool to instantly find full information on desired itineraries.



Greece and Med Travel Centre - Portugal 2024

The latest brochure from Greece and Mediterranean Travel Centre invites travellers who are seeking history, culture, and natural beauty to pick Portugal as their next holiday destination. The European country boasts sun-kissed beaches, bustling cities, and vineyard-carved landscapes, making it a treasure trove for every kind of traveller. The guide details the tour operator's regular departures throughout the year, as well as

recommended itineraries depending on individual preferences. Readers can learn about the seven-day 'Portugal Highlights' tour, for example, which encompasses the best of Lisbon and Porto. The brochure is available to download through the website.

You're simply the best



THE Travel Corporation (TTC) held its Best of the Best event last week in Sydney, bringing together its highest-performing hotels, cruise, and agent partners.

The Best of the Best nights began in 2013, with the recent Sydney celebration the second to be held this year, following a Melbourne evening.

The event saw 65 luxury travel agents attend a private dinner at the Ace Hotel in Sydney with partners Anthony Knox & Associates; COMO Hotels & Resorts; Inspired Luxury; Seabourn Cruise Line; Taj Hotels; The Legian Seminyak BALL; and Uniworld Boutique River Cruises.

Travel advisors were treated to updates from all seven of the partners over a three-course meal, followed by generous prizes offering the chance to experience first-hand some of the incredible product presented to them.

Pictured is the Best of the Best team, Jennifer

Compton, Seabourn; Thushara Liyanarachchi, TAJ Hotels; Brenda Nash, The Legian Seminyak BALL; Tony Knox, Anthony Knox & Associates; Jen Pagett, Uniworld; Lynne Ireland, Inspired Luxury; and Jonica Paramor, Como Hotels & Resorts. *MS*

Brolga noms open

NOMINATIONS are open for the 2024 Brolga Tourism Awards, the Northern Territory's most prestigious tourism and hospitality prizes.

The 37th Brolga NT Tourism Awards gala event will be on 09 Nov at the Alice Springs Convention Centre.

There are 26 business categories, including Tourism Attractions, Business Event Venues, and Tourism Restaurants.

Nominations close 14 Aug, with submissions due 04 Sep.

Head to www.brolgaawards.com.au to find out more.

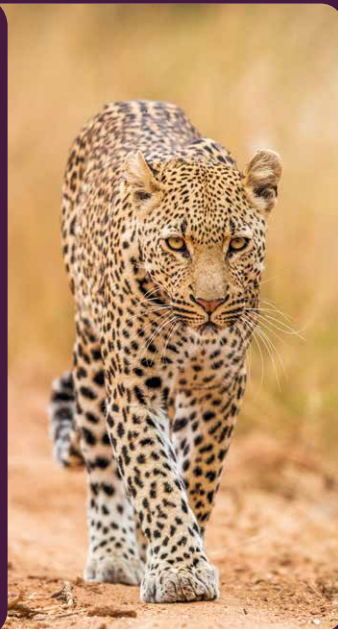
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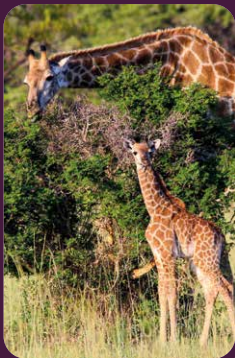
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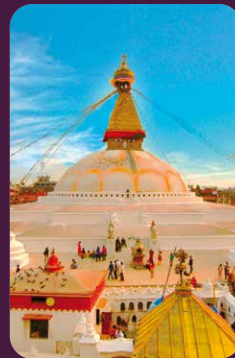


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