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Uber for teens in Oz

UBER has launched services for unaccompanied riders aged between 13 and 17 in selected parts of Australia today, following successful trials in the US.

Uber for Teens will only be available initially in South Australia, the ACT and Tasmania, before a full launch in late 2024.

QF speeds up wi-fi rollout

QANTAS will fast-track the rollout of complimentary, high-speed wi-fi across its fleet of international aircraft, with connections to be progressively retrofitted later this year.

Initially deferred until global satellite technology was able to deliver the same quality that domestic pax currently enjoy, the first planes to be fitted will be its A330s, B787s and A380s.

Using expanded satellite broadband services provided by Viasat, Qantas has assured its customers the speed and bandwidth on offer will enable lag-free streaming of movies, TV shows, news and live sports.

Installation on all eight of its A330-200LR aircraft, which currently operate routes to Asia and the United States, is anticipated to be completed and switched on by the end of 2024.

After these routes, it is expected that trans-Tasman and Pacific flights will follow, before rolling

out on European routes toward the latter half of 2026.

Qantas confirmed that the fast and free wi-fi will also be installed in stages for use on its B787, A380 and A330-300s, commencing from 2025.

Qantas Executive Manager for Product and Service, Phil Capps, said it was key to wait until the technology could fulfil its customer requirements

"We didn't want to go out strong with int'l wi-fi until we were comfortable that we could meet a comparable benchmark," he told *The Australian*.

New A350 and B787 aircraft currently on order for Qantas will also be high-speed wi-fi capable upon delivery. AB

Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today features seven pages of news including our **Sustainability** page, plus a full page from **Silversea**.

Envoyage US update

FLIGHT Centre Travel Group's independent (FCTG) Envoyage arm has launched a dedicated division in the US to support travel advisors with group bookings.

FCTG staff will assist US agents secure the best group rates, manage inventory, finalise documents, and aid bookings.

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Aurora goes farther

AURORA Expeditions has released the details of its Antarctica 2025-26 season, which the Aussie operator is hailing as its "most adventurous yet".

The latest season includes 32 voyages across its three purpose-built ships - *Greg Mortimer*, *Sylvia Earle* and *Douglas Mawson* - and eight new itineraries visiting East Antarctica, the Ross Sea, the NZ Subantarctic Islands, as well as a circumnavigation of Tasmania.

We offer better deals

KOGAN Travel is making a comeback, and this time it's returning as a new deals aggregator that it believes will "undercut some of travel's biggest names".

It's the third iteration of Kogan Travel, which began in 2015, before seven years later teaming up with Luxury Escapes in 2022 as part of another push in travel.

Kogan Travel deals are exclusive to Kogan FIRST members, with

discounts on offer of between 10% and 20% across hotels, holiday packages and activities.

Some of the launch deals include a five-night stay at Anvaya Resort in South Kuta for \$496pp and a seven-night stay at Centara Villas in Phuket for \$278pp.

"At Kogan.com, providing remarkable value for our shoppers is our mission," said Kogan Travel's Ron Gelberg.

"Part of this is finding new and better ways to reward our most loyal customers, FIRST members - Kogan Travel is no different.

"Our intel showed us that Aussies weren't always getting the best deals using the usual sites, and our platform has uncovered discounts that can't be found anywhere else.

"As it grows, we'll be offering more and more destinations and deals, ensuring that Aussies journeying domestically or internationally can rely on Kogan Travel as their first stop."

Founder Ruslan Kogan also told News Corp this week that his company's two million customers provides "huge leverage" when negotiating deals with travel suppliers. *JHM*

Bonza reduces GC

BONZA has reduced the number of flights available on offer from its Gold Coast base.

All current routes remain operational from the Queensland hub, however some flights have been dropped down to once a week due to plane availability.

Rail Europe

Unlock European Trains with Grant Robertson



Eurostar Booking & Changing Dates

Eurostar: Watch this [short video](#) to learn how easy it is to select and book the most suitable tickets for your clients, manage any required date changes and even process a refund (where applicable).

Routes & times: For more information on all of Eurostar's routes, travel times and facilities, refer to this [product sheet](#) under Planning Resources.

Expert Tip: When booking Eurostar trains, use the generic stations for searching availability; London (All stations), Paris (All stations). This lets the system choose the best railway station for you.

agent.raileurope.com/contact-us | jhooper@raileurope.com (VIC, TAS, SA)
grobertson@raileurope.com (NSW, ACT, QLD, WA & NT)

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Silversea upgrades

SILVERSEA Cruises is offering a limited-time suite upgrade offer.

Two category suite upgrades are available for ocean voyages, alongside a 15% reduced deposit promotion - see **p8** for details.

LANDSCAPES OF NORTHERN SPAIN & PORTUGAL JOURNEYS



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MALLORCA

Today's issue of *TD* is coming to you from the idyllic island of Mallorca in Spain as *Sun Princess* makes her final stop ahead of a naming ceremony in Barcelona tomorrow.

INFAMOUS Australian fugitive Christopher Skase couldn't have picked a nicer place to flee from the law - Mallorca is beautiful.

Granted, the weather wasn't the best today, but the tree-lined streets, quaint laneways, impressive cathedrals and city fountains make the Spanish island an ideal choice for any holidaymaker.

Unlike Skase though, we're only here for the day as we set sail bound for Barcelona where Princess Cruises will officially welcome its new *Sun Princess* into the fleet with a variety of festivities throughout the ship.

Aside from the formalities, Princess is hosting a grand music festival to celebrate, with acclaimed British singer Natasha Bedingfield performing.

Bedingfield is no stranger to Princess Cruises, having also performed at the naming of *Royal Princess* back in 2013.

Princess Cruises President, John Padgett, is already in the party mood it appears, having been spotted last night busting a move on the dance floor in the main Piazza.

Groupon links with SiteMinder

GROUPON and SiteMinder have unveiled an exclusive partnership which will see them forge enhanced travel experiences through strengthening customer search journeys.

The new partnership will empower hotels by integrating SiteMinder's channel manager solution into Groupon's platform, streamlining the pricing and distribution process, while introducing new offerings for hoteliers and customers.

It will also extend hotels' reach, and curate the best possible

supply for Groupon.

SiteMinder Vice President Ecosystem & Strategic Partnerships, James Bishop, believes the partnership will drive revenue growth for hotels.

"At the heart of this collaboration is a shared goal to open more doors for hotels, giving them wider access to a broader range of guests as international travel accelerates.

"By partnering with Groupon, we are providing our customers the opportunity to feature on a growing platform where more guests are now shopping for stays," Bishop said. *MS*

Air NZ rejigs fares

AIR New Zealand has unveiled a restructure of its short-haul booking options that it believes will offer greater flexibility and in-flight value.

Coming into effect from 11 Jun, new fares will see the carrier end its seat+bag ticket option, with pax who buy seat tix needing to pay an extra NZ\$30 for one bag.

The new range of fare options include Seat, Theworks, Worksflexi, Premiumconomy, Premiumflexi, Businesspremier and Businessflexi.

All offer passengers a fully flexible and refundable ticket.

All travellers boarding an Air NZ flight across the Tasman will also have access to full in-flight entertainment, snacks/meals, and non-alcoholic beverages, while the purchasing of in-flight bites on board will be discontinued.

The Chat

with
Jenny



Travel Daily

A conversation with
Jill Abel

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LE Agent Hub comp

EXCLUSIVE

LUXURY Escapes has launched a new platform called Agent Hub, providing the opportunity for agents to access its best offers and earn a commissionable rate that is fully tracked and managed through the new portal.

To mark the launch, throughout Apr there will be weekly winners announced in *Travel Daily*, who will be awarded the value of a booking in the form of commission or LE credit.

The first winners have already earned up to \$3,499 worth of credit each.

For more information about the new Agent Hub, see [HERE](#).



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Qatar Grand Prix

TODAY IS
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VA rides loyalty wave



VIRGIN Australia's Velocity program has partnered with DiDi Australia, allowing members to earn loyalty points on every ride. Velocity members and Virgin Australia Business Flyer members will earn one Velocity point per

\$1 of eligible spend on every DiDi ride taken within Australia.

To celebrate the new tie-up, 1,000 bonus Velocity points are on offer for new and existing DiDi customers who link their Velocity account in the DiDi app by 11.59pm (AEST) on 15 May.

"We are the only airline loyalty program in Australia giving members the opportunity to earn points on every rideshare trip they take," Velocity Frequent Flyer CEO, Nick Rohrlach, said.

The announcement coincides with the Velocity membership busting through the 12 million mark, which includes one million new members gained in the past 12 months alone.

MEANWHILE, Virgin Australia has delivered the second installment of its uplifting 'Bring on Wonderful' brand campaign.

The latest chapter of the marketing push focuses on Virgin Australia's people, and also offers a new perspective from the eyes of younger travellers.

One of the ad spots tells the story of a family heading on holiday with their reluctant teenage daughter, who is pleasantly surprised by Virgin Australia baggage handlers who unexpectedly start dancing. **AB** View the commercial **HERE**.



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ATIA UPDATE

from Nina Hedges, Compliance Manager



AFTER nearly two decades in the travel industry, it was the desire to give something back to the

travel industry that drove me to apply for a role with ATIA.

Each time I attend our head office in Sydney I am grateful for the opportunity to contribute to an industry that has been so pivotal in my life.

Last week I returned from an incredible three days in Sydney.

It was a visit of connection, both with my team and our invaluable members and consumer groups.

I would like to take this opportunity to give a special shout out to an unstoppable ATAS duo, Gina and Amanda whose tireless efforts in managing and processing the ATAS renewals have not gone unnoticed.

Without a doubt, my meetings with our members are always one of the highlights for me.

This visit was no exception, as I engaged with representatives from various segments of the industry, from online market places to consolidators to corporate businesses.

Each member represents a unique segment of the travel industry and it was a reminder of the breadth and depth of our associations reach solidifying our position as the heartbeat of the Australian travel industry.

These moments reaffirm just how fortunate I feel to be a part of an association that I am not just proud of, but deeply aligned.

I want to say a very large thank you to all of you that support the association, without you, we could not continue our mission of supporting both you and the industry at large, and I very much look forward to visiting you all one day soon.

Pinto subs in for Clark

TOURISM Tasmania Chief Executive Officer Sarah Clark will take maternity leave from mid-Jun to late-Oct, with Vanessa Pinto (**pictured**) stepping into the role in an acting capacity to over her absence.

Pinto is currently the Chief Operating Officer at the state's Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania, and brings with her executive experience across both the private and public sectors.

Her professional focus to date has focused on marketing and brand communications, coupled with strong government, operations and leadership.

Tourism Tasmania said Pinto will be supported by the agency's "strong executive leadership team



and board, who will steward the delivery of Tourism Tasmania's program and Tasmania's 2030 Visitor Economy Strategy".

Prior to joining the state marketing body in Oct 2022 (**TD** 20 Oct 2022), Clark held the role of MD ANZ at Intrepid for close to three years. **AB**

The luxury of choice for itravel LUXE

ITRAVEL has welcomed two new advisors to its new LUXE by itravel network (**TD 08 May**), with Sharon Godden and another unnamed agent joining its growing ranks this week.

"As the demand for luxury travel continues to soar to new heights, LUXE by itravel remains at the forefront of this flourishing industry," Jo Howard, itravel National Business Development Manager, said.

"We are thrilled to welcome Sharon Godden and the unnamed second agent to the LUXE team, as their addition underscores our commitment to delivering unparalleled luxury experiences to our clients," she added.

Godden (**pictured**) is based in Collaroy, NSW while the other new agent is based in Sydney, bolstering the number of advisors in itravel's LUXE team up to 10.

"I knew I was ready to establish my own business and



wanted to align myself with an entrepreneurial mobile-based company specialising in luxury travel and experiences," Godden enthused this week.

"I felt that after meeting with Steve Labroski, I knew LUXE by itravel offered everything I needed and more.

"Plus having the amazing support of the head office team it was an easy decision to make joining the LUXE team.

"I am so excited for my future career in travel," she added.

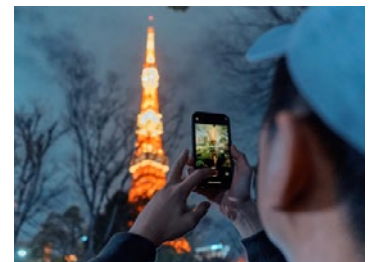
Agents interested in becoming an itravel LUXE member, franchise, mobile or link affiliate can **CLICK HERE** for info. *JM*

The Rising Sun is hot

THE year is off to a flying start for travel to Japan, with an almost 50% increase in the first quarter.

New data released by Japan National Tourism Organization (JNTO) shows the number of Australians visiting the country in the first quarter of the year has increased by 46.3% compared to the same period in 2019, with visitors last month alone up a staggering 87.4% compared to pre-pandemic.

Local Executive Director, Naoki Kitazawa, said the fantastic figures confirm what JNTO had been predicting, with strong interest in the country from Aussies travelling to Asia this year.



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Thursday	23rd	May	Sunshine Coast
Wednesday	29th	May	Sydney

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Next step for SAF

BOEING is set to team up with Wagner Sustainable Fuels to help grow Australia's sustainable aviation fuel (SAF) industry.

Wagner has begun the design and construction of Australia's first steady supply of SAF at the Wellcamp Airport in Toowoomba, to blend SAF to international aviation regulations.

Slated for completion by the end of 2024, the new facility will "provide a focus for federal and state policy makers and introduce the supply chain to this potential \$3 billion+ per year industry", said Matt Doyle, CEO at Wagner Sustainable Fuels.

According to Boeing Australia, the partnership represents a "step forward" in the Boeing/CSIRO SAF Roadmap (**TD** 11 Aug 2023).

EUROPE CRACKS DOWN ON OVERTOURISM

TWO European destinations are taking action against overtourism in order to protect their local environments and way of life.

Greece is moving to ban bars, sunbeds, umbrellas, and all types of constructions on 198 of its beaches, following complaints by residents over shoreline-use violations last year.

The protests were prompted by the illegal placement of umbrellas and sunbeds and the operation of beach bars across hundreds of public Greek beaches.

The list of protected beaches, declared as "Apatites Paralies" (Untrodden Beaches), include those near or part of Natura 2000 areas or marine parks, and those on islands such as Agios Efstratios (**pictured**), Samothrace, Lesbos, Syros, Evia, Andros, Tilos, Icaria and on the mainland, including Southern Mani.

The incoming law will also see fines of up to 60,000 euros for



constructions that impede beach and sea access, including walls and buildings, fences, awnings, and the placement of vehicles.

According to Greece's Environment Minister, Theodoros Skylakakis, the goal is to effectively combine environmental protection with sustainable development.

MEANWHILE, thousands of protestors took to the streets of Tenerife in Spain over the weekend to call for the temporary limitation of tourist arrivals in

order to curb a boom in short-term holiday rentals and hotel construction, which is pricing locals out of the housing market.

"It's not a message against the tourist, but against a tourism model that doesn't benefit this land and needs to be changed," one of the protesters told *Reuters* during the march in Tenerife's capital, Santa Cruz de Tenerife.

The Canary Islands is expected to pass a draft law later this year to tighten the rules on short-stay accommodation. *JM*

ECO Townsville

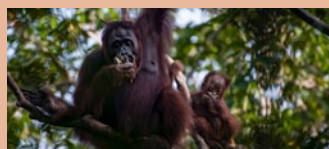
TOWNSVILLE has become the third destination in Queensland and the ninth in the country to achieve ECO Destination status with Ecotourism Australia.

Home to two World Heritage Areas, the Great Barrier Reef and the Wet Tropics, 82% of Townsville's surface area is made up of protected natural zones.

Choose your own authentic adventure in Borneo

IN CELEBRATION of Earth Day, Adventure World has introduced its new 'Authentic Borneo' collection, allowing travellers to immerse themselves in the island's rainforests, cultural heritage, and wildlife.

There are three journeys to choose from, including a 13-night adventure from Kuching to Kota Kinabalu and



Sandakan, which traverses jungles, limestone caves, beaches, national parks, and rainforests, as well as visiting wildlife rehabilitation centres where guests can see orangutans and sun bears.

A&K invites designs

ABERCROMBIE & Kent (A&K) has partnered with Mara Triangle Conservancy to launch an international open design competition for a Masai Mara Conservation Centre in Kenya.

The initiative invites architects to submit designs that focus on sustainable construction practices and eco-friendly materials.



#TRAVELINSPO

Check out which destinations are trending **HERE**

Travel & Cruise
Weekly

MONEY

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

AU\$1 = US\$0.645

AFTER hitting five-month lows against the greenback, the Aussie has steadily returned to the \$0.645 mark.

As tension across the Middle East persists, it is creating big implications on a global economic scale, causing a stall in the foreign exchange market.

Treasurer Jim Chalmers has warned that the sticky inflation situation could ultimately dampen Australia's economy.

Wholesale rates this morning.

US	\$0.645
UK	£0.522
NZ	\$1.090
Euro	€0.605
Japan	¥99.95
Thailand	฿23.93
China	¥4.677
South Africa	12.38
Canada	\$0.884
Crude oil	US\$87.29

Dubai insurance up?

THE recent United Arab Emirates floods, which hit Dubai particularly hard, could also hit the travel trade's insurance rates, TMU Management warned.

The travel merchant insurer alerted inbound travel providers based in Dubai, or international tour operators offering products in the city, they are very likely to see increases in rates.

TMU said underwriters are unlikely to soon forget about the UAE's worst rains in 75 years.

Crikey! It's Rob in wax



CONSERVATIONIST and television personality Rob Irwin (pictured) will soon join his dad Steve Irwin at Madame Tussauds Sydney, where his likeness will be immortalised in wax, making him the youngest celebrity to ever grace the tourist attraction.

"Being approached by Madame Tussauds Sydney to receive a wax figure is a huge honour, I'm such a fan of the Madame Tussauds attractions; they're home to the most influential celebrities in the world, and I'm very proud that I'll be amongst them," Rob said, whose wax figure will be unveiled later this year, wearing the iconic Australia Zoo khaki set made famous by his father.

Irwin reflected on his father's presence at Madame Tussauds in Sydney and the process that went behind it.

"Nine years ago, my dad, Steve Irwin, was posthumously honoured with a Madame Tussauds Sydney figure," commented Rob.

"My mum and the Australia Zoo team got behind the project, supplying information, images,

and clothing to allow their studio team to expertly sculpt his figure in tribute to his life and legacy."

Madame Tussauds General Manager Richard Dilly described Rob as "the man of the moment" and spoke highly of the impact he has already had on the planet during his career.

"He's also among the most requested Aussie celebrities by local and international guests.

"There's no one like him, and we're thrilled to add him to the incredible line-up of stars at Madame Tussauds Sydney," he said.

Irwin was recently co-host of *I'm a Celebrity...Get Me Out Of Here* and has also starred in *Crikey! It's the Irwins*.

He is also a zookeeper and continues to work at Australia Zoo, where he takes part in an annual crocodile research trip on the Steve Irwin Wildlife Reserve in Queensland.

An avid photographer, Irwin has also taken part in a range of exhibitions around the globe, including in Africa, New Zealand and Europe. *JHM*



Window Seat

MANY of us have been on a vacation which we would call "life-changing", but it's unlikely one Brazilian man was expecting that out of a trip to a comic book convention.

The 36-year-old man was in line at the 2022 Comic-Con convention in Sao Paulo, when he went viral on social media for his uncanny - an unintended - resemblance to Clark Kent.

The man, who was not in costume on the day, indeed draws an eerie resemblance to Superman's alter ego, with his barrel chest and thick glasses, and someone at the Comic Con agreed, shooting a video of him and posting it to TikTok.

Given he does not have any social media accounts, the man only learned weeks later through his friends he had become known online as 'The Brazilian Superman'.

Two years later, the man now travels around Brazil, visiting hospitals, schools, and charities, posing for pictures as Superman in his new costume (pictured).

That said, we've never seen this guy and Clark Kent in the same room together...





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