



## Today's issue of TD

*Travel Daily* today features eight pages of news including our **Sustainability** page, plus full pages from:

- Silversea
- AAT Kings

## Savings for years

**MORE** than 500 voyages sailing from 2024 through to 2026 are eligible for Silversea's limited-time savings of \$5,000 per suite if booked by 31 Oct, with additional perks including 15% deposit on its all-inclusive fares.

Find out more on **page nine**.

## Highlights of Tassie

**AGENTS** can win a place on an extensive East Coast Highlights family trip to Tasmania in a new incentive from AAT Kings.

Each deposited booking earns an entry into the draw, with your clients able to save up to \$6,400 on selected itineraries.

More details on **page 10**.

## US travel to be expedited

**AFTER** a false start in 2019, Australia will be added to the US global entry program through a phased launch from Jan next year.

The decision by the United States to incorporate Australia into the program has the potential to slash significant time currently needed for Aussies to enter the country, including reduced airport queuing and expedited security clearances.

Under the pilot phase, 1,000 Australian travellers who have visited the US five times or more in the last 12 months will be eligible to take part in Jan 2025.

The next phase will then kick off in late 2025, which will give the green light for an unlimited number of Australians to participate in the program, so long as new laws are successfully passed in Australia.

Interested parties must apply online and undergo a background check and a personal interview to be eligible, and must also pay a

US\$100 application fee.

After being sanctioned to join, Aussie travellers will have access to the program for five years.

Speaking from Washington about the major development, Foreign Minister Penny Wong said it is a major win for Australian travellers, and will also reduce the cost for local businesses wanting to forge closer economic ties in America.

"This is about ensuring that Australians who do business here in the United States, who are frequent travellers here, are able to access the United States much more easily, reducing the cost of doing business," Wong said.

Under the program, Aussies will automatically have access to the TSA Pre-Check program, as well as automated kiosks instead of longer passport control lines.

Australia has been vocal about joining for over a decade, and will be added alongside members such as the UK and Canada. *AB*

## Riley joins Collette

**COLLETTE** has announced the appointment of former P&O Cruises marketing executive, Narelle Riley (**pictured**), as its new Director of Marketing.

Drawing on more than 25 years of communications experience, with eight of those years spent in the travel and tourism industry, Riley is tasked with driving the brand's growth and engagement in the Aussie market, with her first priority being to build up her marketing team.

Collette is also recruiting for several sales and reservations roles, including someone to lead its Australian call centre.



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## Escape backs NTIAs again

**THE** National Travel Industry Awards (NTIAs) has secured News Corp's Escape brand again as a sponsor of its People Choice Award in Sydney.

This marks the second year that Escape has supported the coveted award, which was introduced at last year's NTIAs (**TD** 23 Jun 2023) to celebrate the most popular travel brands as determined by the Australian public.

Nominations for the category are open to ATAS-accredited retail and online travel agencies, tour operators and cruise lines.

"We are privileged to have Escape's steadfast support for the People's Choice Award, which truly captures the voice of the Australian traveller," ATIA CEO, Dean Long, said.

"We thank Escape and News Corp for their long-standing support in making this award possible," he added.

"We invite all Australian

travellers to take part in this exciting journey by nominating their favourite travel brand."

Escape readers are being encouraged to nominate their favourite travel brand in 50 words or less online **HERE** before 12pm AEDT on Fri 30 Aug.

Voters have the chance to score many exciting prizes, including a holiday for two to Britain and Ireland worth more than \$20,000.

There are also two \$500 TravelPay Mastercard Gift Cards up for grabs.

News Corp Australia's Head of Food, Travel & Health, Kerrie McCallum, said Escape's sponsorship of the award "underscores our commitment to showcasing excellence in the travel industry".

The winning brand will be named at the award ceremony taking place at the ICC Sydney on 26 Oct - **CLICK HERE** to secure your spot today. *JM*

## Nuell returns to Oz

**LONG-TIME** Marriott International executive Jason Nuell (**pictured**) has been appointed as the company's Area Vice President for Australia, New Zealand & Pacific.

Most recently based in Singapore as VP of Customer Experience & F&B Design Services for the Asia Pacific region, Nuell's new role will see him return home to Australia to oversee the financial performance of 46 hotels, and a further 20 pipeline properties across the region.

Nuell has held several senior corporate and market leadership positions at Marriott International over the span of 20 years, working in locations across Asia, China, India, the US and Europe.



## Tickets almost gone

**TRAVEL24**, **TD**'s new event taking place at the Sofitel Darling Harbour in Sydney featuring an extensive speaker line-up, will take place on Thu.

More than 200 industry executives have already registered to attend, but there is still time to purchase last-minute tickets to the must-see gathering.

**CLICK HERE** to grab tickets.

## AIZ interruptions

**AIR** New Zealand has advised customers using its app to prepare for some temporary disruptions this week while the carrier upgrades its Airpoints loyalty program.

The tech update, which will allow members to access more of its Airpoints activity, will affect some app functions, but users have been advised they can still log in and use the Air NZ app to manage flight bookings, including checking in.

# AUSTRALIA'S KIMBERLEY

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## VIVA HOLIDAYS

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PRODUCT / SERVICE** (CATEGORY 23)  
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## Flexible flying trial

**PILOTS** on selected flights are being encouraged to plot their own routes to a destination under a ‘user-preferred routing’ (UPR) trial from Airservices Australia.

The government body has consulted with fellow navigation service providers in New Zealand, Indonesia and Singapore on the trial, which will see pilots able to modify their route based on prevailing winds at the time to shorten flight duration, fuel usage and carbon emissions.

Qantas, Air New Zealand, Garuda Indonesia and Singapore Airlines have signed on to take part in the trial, which will also include Indonesian and Singaporean airspace.

UPR is expected to save around 100L of fuel for a flight between Melbourne and Denpasar, which equates to 26 tonnes annually on a five-times weekly frequency.

A successful trial may see UPR expanded to more city pairs and adopted by more airlines.

## Perth hits number one

**AUSTRALIA** has ranked among global travellers as the third most-loved country in the world, with three of its cities listed in the top 10, according to new data from Flight Centre.

Based on more than 170,000 customer responses over the past year, when asked if they would recommend their recent travel destinations, Australia achieved a score of 92%, just behind the Cook Islands at 93% and Portugal at 94%.

Global travellers declared Perth and Brisbane as the best cities in the world to visit, with a satisfaction rating of 96% and 94%, respectively, while Melbourne appeared further down in the top 10 list.

Australia ranked especially favourably among travellers from South Africa, the United Kingdom, and New Zealand.

“There were some surprising results that go to show it’s not

always the traditionally popular destinations that have something special to offer travellers,” Flight Centre Global Managing Director Andrew Stark said.

“Portugal, renowned for its historic architecture and charming culture, came out on top of the best country list, with the pristine beaches and friendly locals of the Cook Islands a close second.

“Australia performed remarkably well as the third most recommended country,” he said.

New Zealand was also a popular choice among Flight Centre’s global customer base, with Queenstown tying with Brisbane with an impressive score of 94%, while Christchurch made it onto the top 10 cities list as well.

In terms of Australian traveller preferences, Japan was the number one country to visit with a score of 92%, while Queenstown ranked as the most popular city to travel to. *JM*

## Rex restructure?

**REX** has confirmed that passengers flying on regional routes will continue to earn loyalty points and score bonus amounts, despite entering voluntary administration.

In an update to customers delivered last night by administrators EY, customers were told that loyalty accrual will continue, however a restructure would need to be completed for passengers to redeem points.

“While we can’t guarantee the outcome of this process, it is our current expectation that such a restructure is the likely way forward for Rex,” EY’s Sam Freeman said.

“As a Rex Flyer member..we are counting on your support as we map the long-term prospects for the regional airline.”



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## AAT Kings asks clients to discover more

AAT Kings has announced the launch of its new 2025/2026 season itineraries, featuring several new experiences and limited-time deals.

The new range from The Travel Corporation (TTC) brand is designed to provoke travellers into “discovering more” through group travel and coach touring, and also includes the addition of many Make Travel Matter experiences - TTC’s tailored trips to provide positive social and environmental impacts on the communities it visits.

“Each year, we push boundaries to curate the best travel moments, and this season is no exception with the addition of experiences like Emu Ridge Eucalyptus Tour KI, Tasmanian Gourmet Sauce Company and a jet boat cruise across Lake Manapouri in New Zealand,” AAT Kings Group CEO, Ben Hall, said. “Whether guests are looking



for new Make Travel Matter experiences, or want to get reacquainted with the benefits of group travel and coach touring, we invite everyone to discover more with AAT Kings,” he added.

Highlights include exploring the vineyards of Hamelin Bay Wines in Western Australia, discovering the ancestral home of Poutini Ngai Tahu at Mawhera Pae with Pounamu Pathway in New Zealand, and cruising New Zealand’s Lake Manapouri.

To celebrate the launch, AAT

Kings is offering travellers savings of up to \$6,400 per couple, twin share on selected tours departing between 01 Apr 2025 and 31 Mar 2026, when bookings are and paid for by 30 Sep 2024.

MEANWHILE, AAT Kings will also be unveiling a new season of its *A-LISTERS* podcast, with special guest AAT Kings CEO Ben Hall gearing up to discuss everything new and exciting for the 2025/2026 season.

Find out more about the series at [aatkings.com/alisters](http://aatkings.com/alisters). AB

## Punhill Maitland open

VERIU Group has delivered its first rural Punhill property in New South Wales, with the opening of Punhill Matland.

The company’s third New South Wales property (pictured) opened yesterday, and is the first new hotel brand to open in Matland in more than a decade.

The 76-room apartment hotel is located at 373 High Street, close to the commercial centre, and offers a mix of modern studio, one-bedroom, and two-bedroom apartments, including interconnecting and accessible room types.

Punhill Maitland has been designed to accommodate both solo and group travel.



# VIVA HOLIDAYS

THANKS TO THE SUPPORT OF OUR AMAZING AGENT NETWORK, **VIVA HOLIDAYS** IS THRILLED TO BE NOMINATED FOR **MOST OUTSTANDING WHOLESALER PRODUCT / SERVICE** (CATEGORY 23) IN THE 2024 NTIA'S.

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## ATIA slots in praise

**THE** Australian Travel Industry Association (ATIA) has lauded the Federal Government's decision yesterday to open a tender for a new slot manager for Sydney Airport (**TD** 05 Aug) as "a positive step towards strengthening aviation competition".

Opening up a competitive tender process for the position, which is currently held by a company that is majority-owned by Qantas and Virgin, will make it easier for new airlines to get a foothold in the market, the peak industry body believes.

The announcement signals a move "towards a more transparent and fair system that will benefit all airlines and, ultimately, consumers", ATIA CEO Dean Long said.

However, he highlighted that the government is yet to implement several other previously announced reforms, including changing the allocation process to free up more slots and revising the definition of 'new entrant' to make it easier for new airlines to obtain slots.

"We urge the Government to act on these reforms as soon as possible and call on Parliament to support the necessary legislation," Long said.

He also reiterated ATIA's call for action on the 80-20 rule to be updated to 95-5.

"It is essential to modernise this benchmark to reflect current market conditions and support the growth of a competitive domestic aviation sector."

## FJ commits to Canberra



**FIJI** Airways has reaffirmed its commitment to Australia's capital, thanking local trade partners and renewing its ACT Brumbies sponsorship for 2025.

Celebrating one year of international flights from Canberra to Nadi on Tues night (**TD** 31 Jul), local officials, travel agents, partners and stakeholders gathered for a three-course meal and entertainment at the Marion.

The airline's commitment to Canberra was front and centre at the festivities, with speeches delivered by Fiji Airways Chief of Marketing & Sales, Akuila

Batiweti; High Commissioner of the Republic of Fiji to Australia, Ajay Amrit; Chief Minister of the ACT, Andrew Barr; and Head of Aviation at Canberra Airport, Michael Thompson.

Acknowledging the airline's trade partners, Batiweti shared, "I want to thank you all in this group...this journey has been proof of our shared vision of connecting people and cultures across the Pacific and the globe".

Batiweti also explained the significance of the airline returning as a major sponsor of the ACT Brumbies.

"Rugby holds a very special place in the hearts of Fijians," he shared.

"Our partnership with the Brumbies is more than just a sponsorship, it is a testament to our commitment to foster strong connections and support communities through sport." *AP*

**Pictured:** Local trade partners enjoy the festivities in Fiji at a table hosted by John Nickel, Regional General Manager - Australia, Fiji Airways.

## Swan culinary cruises

**SWAN** Hellenic has unveiled its Maris 2025 gourmet cruises, hosted by new chefs from JRE-Jeunes Restaurateurs.

Each of these exclusive Maris voyages showcases the creativity of one of the world-famous chefs in the gourmet organisation.

There will be 10 Maris cruises next year, exploring the Arctic, Europe, and the Mediterranean.

Nine of these cruises will sail aboard *Diana*, and one aboard *Vega*, with guests to be served a signature dish every night.

## DL, EY rescue pax

**DELTA** Air Lines and Etihad Airways have confirmed they are assisting and rebooking travellers connecting to and from daily international flights via interline agreements in place with Rex.

Travellers booked on Etihad Airways tickets with a connecting Rex sector are being managed in line with the carrier's standard schedule change policy, with guests being contacted either directly or through travel agents to advise of rebooking options.

Currently, there are no further changes to interline agreements, with travellers flying on Rex turboprop services continuing to be issued boarding passes for the entire journey at initial check-in.

Passengers due to fly on Rex's Boeing 737 services are being rebooked on complimentary services with Qantas and Virgin Australia in line with standing offers issued by both airlines.

## Woman dies on VA

**A WOMAN** has died after collapsing on a Virgin Australia flight from BNE to MEL.

The passenger collapsed on the flight late last month before it came in to land, with details only made public this week.

Staff on the aircraft rushed to perform CPR, and emergency services attended on the tarmac, however she could not be saved.

**VOTE FOR THE O.G.**

**GLOBUS FOR MOST OUTSTANDING TOUR OPERATOR (CATEGORY 22)**



## Smooth sailing for Ponant



**THE** Ponant roadshow saw 1,000 partners and clients attend six packed sessions in Queensland, NSW, SA and WA to explore the world of small ship luxury cruising.

Keynote speaker, expedition leader Sebastian Jones, captivated attendees with his expertise on the Ross Sea, the Kimberley, and Papua New Guinea, with guests also taking advantage of specials offers on the day.

The events captured the essence of Ponant's French-style luxury, with macaroon towers, gastronomic delights, flowing Champagne, and live music.

The final leg of the roadshow concludes in Melbourne today. *JG*

The Ponant team is **pictured**: Charles Boutet, Kristina Sambaher, Marion Barbier, Dagmar Kanka, Sandra Cahill,

Genevieve Westgarth, Melinda Griggs, Sebastian Jones, Kim Herdiana, and Alex Stragalinos.

### Explore trending

**EXPLORE** Worldwide has revealed new trending destinations in Europe for next year, as bookings to the continent surge almost two-third YOY.

The company's overall passenger bookings are up almost 60%, with Turkey and Albania standing out as emerging destinations for next year.

European bookings now make up two-thirds of Explore's total bookings from Australia, with Italy continuing to top the list, with a 60% YOY increase.

Small-group adventure travel is also on the rise, with the Amalfi Coast Walking tour continuing to be a best-seller.

## The Chat

with Jenny



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## ATIA UPDATE

from Dean Long, CEO



**THE** past week has been a distressing time for the travel and aviation industries, as we lost Rex Airlines on

our major routes.

Thankfully, and most importantly, Rex Airlines continues to fly regionally.

I also want to give a special call-out to Virgin Australia, who were on the front foot at 6am working hand in glove with the agency community to settle the nerves of many impacted travellers.

There is no doubt that the early intervention and support provided by VA and ATIA members ensured Australians continued to have confidence in our system.

While not everyone was impacted by Rex entering voluntary administration, we know that a significant number of you were.

That is why we moved quickly to advocate that any bailout package for Rex must include support for ATIA members.

To further understand the impacts, we have set up a Federal Support page that will enable agents to tell us directly what this collapse has meant for them,

which in turn will provide us with the necessary information to advocate on their behalf.

In the wake of the collapse, we also saw a significant public discussion about how airport slots are being allocated and its impacts.

As regular readers of this column would already know, ATIA has been advocating for the last 18 months for reform of this outdated system, which is desperately needed.

The most impactful comments came from Rod Sims, the former CEO of the Australian Competition & Consumer Commission (ACCC).

He aptly stated that Rex's failure was due to bad policy rather than poor business decisions.

For ATIA, this is a welcomed development, as these comments support the submissions and research we have conducted.

There is no doubt that this has prompted the Federal Government to announce that they will be reforming the role of the Sydney Airport Slot Manager.

This organisation controls the slot management system at Sydney Airport.

Reforming the organisation is another step forward in increasing competition on the aviation front and we congratulate the Government for this action.

## NT Muster

2024



### Join us for a Priscilla-inspired journey through the Territory!

This evening event is an opportunity to learn about the Northern Territory, meet over 30 NT operators, enjoy NT inspired food, and experience Territory culture with a chance to win fantastic prizes!

**Melbourne 10 September**, Aerial, South Wharf

**Brisbane 11 September**, The Warehouse, Fortitude Valley

**Sydney 12 September**, Docksider Cockle Bay Room, Cockle Bay Wharf

Register now





### Green paradise

**STACY** Lubin has been hired by Royal Caribbean International as Director of Environment and Sustainability for the line's new Royal Beach Club private island in the Bahamas.

Lubin brings 20 years of environmental policy experience to the role and will work closely with Bahamian authorities to ensure the club adheres to environmental regulations of both Royal Caribbean and local standards.

Royal Beach Club Paradise Island is a new facility being developed by Royal Caribbean Group in Nassau due to open next year.

The island features a zero waste-to-landfill policy.

## HYATT REGENCY'S LORD OF THE FLIES

**AUSTRALIA'S** largest hotel has employed an army of insects to help manage food waste and cut its environmental footprint.

The 878-room Hyatt Regency Sydney has deployed the Goterra food waste management system, which sees a containerised unit of Black Soldier Fly larvae devour 95% of its excess food in 24 hours.

Hyatt Regency Sydney is the first hotel worldwide to adopt the high-tech solution, an initiative which has been championed by owners M&L Hospitality.

In a colourful twist, the system even carries the inspired name of 'Maggot Robots', but Hyatt Regency General Manager, Jane Lyons, said the system can play a major role in helping the hotel industry tackle climate change.

"The implementation of



Goterra's innovative food waste management system represents a significant milestone in our journey to reduce our carbon footprint," Lyons said.

As a hotel with such a high room count, the property actively processes thousands of tonnes of food waste each year.

"By transforming our food

waste into sustainable protein for agricultural use, including supplying to our own egg supplier, Hilltops Free Range to feed their chickens, we are creating a circular economy.

"This initiative aligns perfectly with our ongoing efforts to consider sustainability in all aspects of our operations." *ML*

### MSC planning tool

**EMISSION** reductions of up to 15% will be realised across the MSC Cruises fleet under a new itinerary planning optimisation tool being rolled out fleet-wide.

The OptiCruise system will help each of the line's ships maximise route efficiency while maintaining guest satisfaction.

Alongside a new mathematical model co-devised by MSC Cruises and the University of Genoa, OptiCruise evaluates port sequencing, ship speed and port arrival times to optimise itineraries based on fuel usage, port charges and food provisions.

### Quest takes sustainability to the heart

**QUEST** Apartment Hotels has wrapped up its annual Franchise Conference, with the ownership community gathering at Ayers Rock Resort.

Kicking off with an event at Wintjiri Wiru, the three-day conference focused on the themes of responsible tourism.

A key message to attendees over the conference was how Quest continues to nurture the communities they operate in while supporting the ongoing success of each franchisee.

"We believe everyone



deserves a place to be themselves, and we create moments that matter, said The Ascott Limited Australasia Managing Director, David Mansfield (pictured).

The conference ended with a closing party overlooking Kata Tjuta accompanied by a concert by singer Ricki-Lee Coulter.

### Hawaii partners

**HAWAII** Tourism Authority has launched a search for new community partners to help manage natural resources in line with its Festivals and Event Program.

Applications are now open for Jan-Jun 2025, with local non-profits and community groups encouraged to apply.

The program aims to support the ongoing practice of Hawaiian culture through to managing major festivals and events that attract guests from outside Hawaii.

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*'A happy salmon.'*

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## Victoria's new Tropical North



**THE** north-western Victorian city of Mildura has “rebranded” in its biggest marketing campaign yet, and has relaunched itself as ‘Tropical North Victoria’.

The rebrand is targeting travellers who typically voyage to North Queensland to enjoy the sunny weather, with ‘Tropical North Victoria’ marketing itself as boasting more sunny days and friendlier wildlife, “providing a safer and more enjoyable experience for visitors”.

The campaign will focus on Tropical North Victoria’s favourable weather, stunning landscapes, and vibrant community spirit.

It is being supported by a comprehensive marketing strategy, such as new brochures and a new website, and will be supported by Australian actor Shane Jacobson (**pictured**), who will serve as a brand ambassador.

Mayor Liam Wood said the Tropical North Victoria rebranding and marketing campaign is a landmark moment for the

region’s tourism industry.

“We’ve always known we have something special in the Mildura region in terms of the unique experiences we have to offer visitors, and as Tropical North Victoria, we’re aiming to make sure the rest of the country knows as well,” he said. *MS*

### Horizon of Khufu

**HORIZON** of Khufu, an immersive expedition to Ancient Egypt in virtual reality, is coming to Sydney next month.

Entertainment platform Fever and VR leader Excurio will bring Horizon of Khufu to Olympic Park, where visitors will be able to take a trip back 4,500 years to the Great Pyramids of Giza.

Guests will be transformed into giant avatars and given exclusive access to Ancient Egypt’s sites, such as the corridors and burial chambers of the Great Pyramid during an enbalming ceremony, as well as the queen’s chambers, and a boat trip on the Nile.

## Window Seat

**GAMBLING** is everywhere in Las Vegas, with punters able to bet at restaurants, petrol stations, grocery stores, laundromats, pharmacies and even in churches.

And of course, you can even try your luck at the airport, with Nevada being home to the only two airports in the US that have slot machines, as some like to offload any pocket change while waiting to board their flight home.

However, one San Diego man saw his luck finally turn at the airport as he hit the jackpot and walked (or flew) away with a US\$1.4 million prize.

The lucky punter, wearing a San Diego Padres MLB hat, posed for a picture in front of his Wheel of Fortune machine after his big win.

After this, the airport may become more of a destination for some jackpot seekers.

## Melbourne to Milan

**GUESTS** at Doubletree by Hilton Melbourne Flinders Street can be transported to the elegance and glamour of Milan via the hotel’s new partnership with Campari.

The Italian liqueur brand has transformed one of the hotel’s rooms and the Platform270 restaurant with plush velvet furnishings and neon lighting.

Available until 30 Sep, the hotel’s ‘Evening in Milan’ package includes a one-night stay in a Campari-themed room, breakfast for two, Campari soda cocktails, and more from \$324 per night.

## MONEY

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

### AU\$1 = US\$0.650

**BLOODBATH** is the adjective doing the rounds to describe the state of affairs on global money markets in the past day.

To put some perspective on just how bad things became, the ‘Magnificent Seven’, which comprises Apple, Tesla, Google, Amazon, Nvidia, Microsoft and Meta, collectively lost US\$800 billion in value.

Back at home, the ASX had its two worst days since Sep 2022 and is set to plunge further as fears of a global recession grow.

*Wholesale rates this morning.*

US	\$0.650
UK	£0.508
NZ	\$1.094
Euro	€0.593
Japan	¥93.59
Thailand	฿23.06
China	¥4.637
South Africa	12.054
Canada	\$0.898
Crude oil	US\$76.37

## SAA doubles MRU

**GROWING** demand for Mauritius has led South African Airways to double its frequencies to the Indian Ocean island.

A second morning flight from Johannesburg to Mauritius will be added from 01 Dec.

From this date, SAA will operate SA190 departing at 9.40am, followed by SA192 at 10.45am, with the return sectors departing Mauritius at 4.30pm and 5.35pm.



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#### More local flavours

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#### More connections

MAKE TRAVEL MATTER® Experience at Port Arthur



#### More natural wonders

Explore Tassie's rugged coastline with Iron Pot Cruises



#### More adventure

Discovering Freycinet National Park

### LISTEN TO WIN

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