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Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today features five pages of the latest travel industry news including our **Luxury** page, a cover wrap from **Tourism New Zealand**, plus full pages from:

- Collette
- Consolidated Travel

The Hoxton cometh

MELBOURNE'S inner-city enclave of Cremorne will become home to the Australian debut of lifestyle and design hotel brand, The Hoxton, opening in 2027.

Signed by Ennismore, a joint venture with Accor, The Hoxton in Melbourne will reside in a redevelopment of the Matchworks Precinct at 560 Church Street.

The hotel will feature 198 rooms in the brand's style of 'Cosy', 'Roomy' and 'Biggy', alongside three F&B outlets including a cafe and bar, and a hybrid event space surrounding a communal pantry known as The Apartment.

Record revenue at FCTG

FLIGHT Centre Travel Group (FCTG) has smashed its own group-wide leisure and corporate revenues despite what it said was significant deflation leading to a 13% year-on-year drop in airfares in the second half of FY2024.

According to the company's full year financial results released this morning, this deflation has been offset by a 10% increase in ticket volumes, plus larger basket sizes for various leisure brands.

Total Transaction Value set a new benchmark for the company, with the \$23.74 billion taken in, marking a \$1.8 billion year-on-year improvement and a slight rise on its prior record in 2019.

Overall, FCTG revealed a thriving balance sheet, reporting a \$320 million Underlying Profit Before Tax for the 2024 fiscal year and group-wide revenue easily outpacing TTV growth.

The result was a 131% increase on the prior year and still factored



in a \$10.7 million loss stemming from the collapse of Rex Airlines, plus cost cutting from the closure of two loss-making subsidiaries.

FCTG Managing Director Graham 'Skroo' Turner (**pictured**), said the result was particularly impressive considering it was done with "a substantially leaner workforce" and a lower cost base.

"In an uncertain macro-economic and geopolitical climate, our business and the industry in general continued to grow - once again highlighting the sector's resilience and our strength as a diversified global travel company," Turner said. *ML*

Plan your NZ famil

TIME is running out to plan your own New Zealand self-famil for 2024, with departures only valid until the end of Nov.

Tourism New Zealand's discount program features a tonne of great deals - info on today's **cover page**.

Star power at NTIA

SYDNEY'S Madame Tussauds will host ATIA's invitation-only 2024 NTIA Finalist Celebration, where the industry's best can let their hair down surrounded by the world's superstars of stage, screen, sport and history.

Sponsored once again by Viking, the exclusive NTIA Finalist Celebration will take place from 6-8pm on Fri 25 Oct, ahead of the NTIA Gala the following evening.

Viking Australia MD, Michelle Black, said it won't just be the waxed celebrities in the spotlight and for NTIA finalists to expect "an evening of distinctive Viking fun" with surprises at every turn.

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Collette's new year

THIRTEEN brand-new itineraries have been added to Collette's global range to celebrate the tour brand's 107th birthday.

Travellers can also save 10% on all 2025 departures worldwide - more details on [page six](#).

Industry fires back on tax

VICTORIA'S 7.5% short stay levy is facing backlash from tour operators after a bill to legalise the tax was introduced into state Parliament yesterday.

The Short Stay Levy Bill will be put in place from 01 Jan and apply to bookings through platforms such as Airbnb and Stayz.

"There is a real concern that this tax is going to make Victoria a very unaffordable and unattractive destination," said Victorian Tourism Industry Council CEO, Felicia Mariani.

Accessible Accommodation Founder Kerry Williams (pictured) said introducing a 7.5% tax is going to have a huge impact on travellers with disabilities.

"It's difficult to travel as it is, and that's going to make it more expensive," Williams told *TD*.

"What this does now is pave the way for local government bodies to introduce a 90-day cap.

"This will be critical and catastrophic for any business that has an Airbnb-style property or a holiday rental style property, of which 20 are our properties."

Accessible Accommodation offers people with disabilities a database of accredited properties that suit their needs across Vic.

According to Williams, because of the new levy, the number of properties available for travellers with high needs is now greatly reduced - and only one will now be suitable in Vic.

"I'd like to see the federal and



state governments actually speak to stakeholders before they make these kinds of decisions and also to remember people with disabilities [make up] 18% of our population, and over 16% are over the age of 65.

"It goes without saying that they need to be considered," she said.

Williams added that ideally, there should be exceptions in place for operators who cater to marginalised communities, such as those with disabilities.

Introduced by Victorian Premier Jacinta Allan, the bill was created with the aim to offer more long-term rentals and social housing.

In Vic, there are 63,000 short-stay accommodation properties, almost 50,000 of which are unavailable for long-term rental.

It's expected that \$60 million in revenue will be raised, which will go towards the building and maintenance of social and affordable housing, while 25% will be invested in regional Vic.

Commercial accommodation such as hotels, motels and caravan parks are exempt and the levy will only apply to stays of less than 28 days. *JHM*

Win a Vietnam famil

TICKET Singapore Airlines fares with Consolidated Travel before 25 Sep to be in with a chance to win one of seven spots on an amazing famil to the Vietnamese capital of Hanoi - find out more on [page seven](#).

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Window Seat

HERE'S one way to secure repeat business for meeting room bookings - make your event as unproductive as possible by introducing dogs.

Pier One Sydney Harbour has joined with RSPCA NSW to launch a new dog-friendly deal for meeting room bookings, with donations to the charity included with every booking.

The deal includes gourmet meals, blankets and a range of toys to take home - for the puppies, not you.



Low airfares here to stay

THIS year will continue the trend of low airfares and high capacity in aviation, according to new figures from Helloworld's Express Travel Group.

Speaking at the Xchange conference in Ho Chi Minh City, Quynh Giang (**pictured**), GM of Commercial - Data & Analytics, told delegates that passenger growth was particularly noticeable in markets that were still reaching maturity, such as Asia and particularly Thailand, while price drops varied from region to region.

Giang pointed to Q1 this year as proof of the trend.

"When we compare [the period] to Q1 2023, an average price on an international airfare out of Australia has dropped around 12.4%," Giang said.

"Indonesia is the most



impacted, having dropped by 21%, while Thailand has dropped the least, around 3.8% and Canada around 3.5%.

"If we isolate Jul [2024] and compare it to last year, our data shows an average decrease of around 10-15%," he added.

Giang also noted that some regions were remaining stable, including parts of Europe, the Pacific and New Zealand, while the time between people booking and travelling has also shrunk.

While prices for Europe weren't necessarily dropping sharply, passengers were still increasing.

"There is also more capacity in Europe and North America, mature markets that continue to show year-on-year consumer growth," Giang added.

He noted that overall, these trends combined had resulted in significantly more passenger numbers across all cabins.

MEANWHILE, Express Travel Group will host its next Xchange conference in Fiji next year.

With a crowd of around 300 people at this year's event in Vietnam, including agents and a variety of suppliers, delegates were treated to an array of informative sessions, networking drinks, city activities and a gala dinner to end proceedings.

Olympian and gold medal winner Brooke Hanson (**pictured**) skillfully led attendees through the program as emcee, while former CEO of Facebook ANZ, Stephen Scheeler, presented the keynote for the conference. *DF*



Bon Voyage is back

TRAVEL Daily's celebratory end-of-year event, Bon Voyage, is confirmed to return in 2024 bigger and better than ever.

Marking another big year in the travel industry, the gathering will be held on 28 Nov at 12-Micron in Barangaroo, Sydney, which features sweeping views of Darling Harbour and Balmain.

TV and radio personality, comedian, and now architecture and design aficionado, Tim Ross, has agreed to emcee the event.

Bon Voyage will get its groove on with DJ Sudeep Gohill providing the tunes, while an array of great food and drink will be served throughout.

Tickets to Bon Voyage are on sale now at earlybird rates, with those who purchase now going into a draw to win one of five signed copies of Tim Ross' book *Motel*, by sharing their favourite motel story in 50 words or less.

To lock in tickets, **CLICK HERE**.

Travelmarvel 2025

TRAVELMARVEL has launched its 2025 Australian tours, with a variety of styles to choose from.

The company's extensive range of tours will see travellers explore the Kimberley coast on a small ship expedition cruise.

The 10-day 'Kimberley Coast Adventure' will see guests embark from Broome to Darwin for nine nights aboard Heritage Expeditions' *Heritage Adventurer*.

Highlights include Zodiac expeditions to key sights such as Horizontal Falls, Montgomery Reef, and King George Falls.

Guests will also explore the millennia-old Wandjina rock art site at Freshwater Cove with a local indigenous guide.

Meanwhile, the seven-day Cape York 4WD Expedition offers an off-road adventure aboard a custom-designed four-wheel drive vehicle with a maximum of just 20 guests.

The tour includes six nights in premium accommodation.

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Applications close Friday 13 September 2024

Crystal boosts 'Tek'

TRAVELTEK has inked a new distribution deal with Crystal Cruises which will enhance the line's profile in the Australian and NZ market.

Under the deal, agents can access itinerary details for both *Crystal Serenity* and *Crystal Symphony* and securely book staterooms.

Traveltek Global Director of Revenue and Supply, Tracy Sharp, said Crystal Cruises is the latest new partner in an exciting year of growth.

"As the cruise industry continues to lead travel's growth, with global capacity projected to expand by over 10% in the next four years, we remain committed to enriching our platform with new cruise partners over the next 12 months," Sharp said.

AN EPIC HOTEL IN AN EPIC UNIVERSE

UNIVERSAL Orlando Resort has revealed the details of three new hotels that will open their doors at the entertainment giant's new Epic Universe theme park coming next year (**TD** 05 Feb).

Ahead of the park's opening next year, bookings can now be made at Universal Helios Grand Hotel, a 500-room Mediterranean inspired monolith that will be surrounded by the theme park's gardens and waterways.

The hotel is co-owned and will be operated by luxury brand Loews Hotels, which operates seven properties at Universal's theme park precinct in Orlando.

Perks available to hotel guests include a private entrance into the Epic Universe theme park with valid admission tickets and early entry up to one hour before regular crowds on select days.

Themed after Helios, the Greek



God of the Sun, the hotel will be adorned with Mediterranean style gardens, celestial patterns, constellations and floor-to-ceiling windows offering panoramic views over the theme park.

Guest rooms will take on a tranquil garden layout, with a limited number of family suites themed on the *How to Train Your Dragon* film franchise, with colours inspired by the Viking

village of Berk.

Dining options at Universal Helios Grand Hotel will include a rooftop bar serving tapas and handcrafted cocktails, along with an all-day restaurant, contemporary coffee shop and a poolside burger bar and grill.

The resort's swimming pool will feature underwater speakers, rentable poolside cabanas, a jacuzzi and movie screenings. *ML*

TravelManagers soak up ILTM in Singapore

NINE Personal Travel Managers from home-based agent network TravelManagers indulged their passion for luxury travel with attendance at ILTM Asia-Pacific in Singapore.

The dedicated luxury expo attracts more than 650 suppliers and specialist luxury agents for official meetings and plenty of networking.

Accompanied by leaders from the company's National Partnership Office, the group



(pictured) finessed existing contacts and formed new ones, with highlights including a private dinner event in the Presidential Suite at Mandarin Oriental Singapore.

French Riviera Club

W SINGAPORE Sentosa Cove has opened a pop-up Monaco French Riviera Club to bring a taste of the idyllic Mediterranean to the city.

In partnership with Coty Travel Retail and Lancaster Sun Care, the pop-up has taken over the hotel lobby, allowing guests to sample the French Riviera lifestyle.

The space has been decorated with umbrellas, buoys and sunbeds.

Awasi signs Latin

AWASI Luxury Lodges has joined forces with Unique Latin America in a new partnership which will boost the brand's profile in the Australian and NZ market.

A member of the Relais and Chateaux portfolio, Awasi operates all-inclusive lodges in destinations such as Atacama, Patagonia and Iguazu Falls, with guests able to access 4WD tours with private guides during a stay.



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Paris Las Vegas is celebrating 25 years on the Strip with a luxury room refit. The hotel has redesigned its 756 luxury guestrooms in its Versailles Tower, which features some of the largest standard rooms on the Strip. Almost 40 of the rooms now feature a new balcony with Strip views. The US\$100 million-plus redesign also focused on the hotel's corridors, exteriors, and a pedestrian bridge, which will be completed later in the year.



Royal Davui Island Resort, Fiji has unveiled its multi-million-dollar refurbishment, which began transforming more than seven months ago, in the first half of the year. The renovations have included a comprehensive overhaul of the resort's iconic Banyan Bar & Restaurant, its 16 luxurious villas, all with private plunge pools, and general spaces. All new designs aim to blend seamlessly with the private island's natural setting.



Park Regis by Prince Singapore has announced its official rebrand after its extensive room refurbishment. As part of the rebrand, the hotel will retain its iconic fleur-de-lis logo, however its 203 guest rooms have been completely refurbished with contemporary studio-style accommodation in four distinct categories, some of which enjoy direct pool access. The hotel is located in the heart of Singapore, along Merchant Road.



Hilton Bali Resort has unveiled its Elara Seaside Lounge & Bar, a new adults-only seaside venue, the latest development of the resort's comprehensive renovation. The menu features classic Mediterranean dishes highlighting the region's focus on "wellness cuisine". The property also recently refreshed its accommodations, its kids' club, and its event spaces.



Reward Group has completed its upgrade of **Rydges North Sydney**, partnering with High Street Holdings and EVT to transform the hotel's guest rooms, reception, bar, restaurant, conference facilities, dining room, and gym. All 168 rooms, and its 48 luxury suites, have been upgraded with kitchenettes, as well as high-end fittings and fixtures.

Swiss rail sessions

AGENTS are being invited to a Rail Europe mini roadshow, where they will spend their morning at the movies, learning about the many perks of selling Switzerland by train.

The aggregator has scheduled three sessions next week which will be packed with insider tips, booking hacks and expertise on the Swiss Travel Pass and more.

There will also be a stack of prizes to win on the day along with plenty of Swiss merchandise and goodies to take home.

The roadshow events will take place on 02 Sep in Adelaide at Palace Nova in Eastend; 03 Sep in Melbourne at Lido Cinema in Hawthorn; and 04 Sep at 5-star Cinemas in New Farm, with each event kicking off at 11am.

CLICK HERE to RSVP by 30 Aug.

SYD approach road

THE next stage of the Sydney Gateway, the major road interchange between the WestConnex expressway and Sydney Airport, will open on Sun.

The new five-kilometre highway will save motorists an estimated 17 minutes between the Airport and the St Peters Interchange.

SeaLink Bruny Isl

SEALINK Tasmania has taken the lead as the naming sponsor for the Bruny Island Ultra Marathon, which opens for registration on 02 Sep.

The company will serve as the naming sponsor for the marathon for the next three years, with additional departure times added to the ferry schedule to service participants and spectators.

Cycling the Camino

UTRACKS has introduced two new self-guided coastal cycling adventures along the famed Camino Norte track in Spain.

Experienced cyclists may take on an 18-day itinerary from Bilbao to the Cathedral of Santiago, priced from \$4,190 per person.

Riders will cover an average of 40km per day, with the package including 17 nights in hotels, along with luggage transfers and hybrid bicycle rental with helmet.

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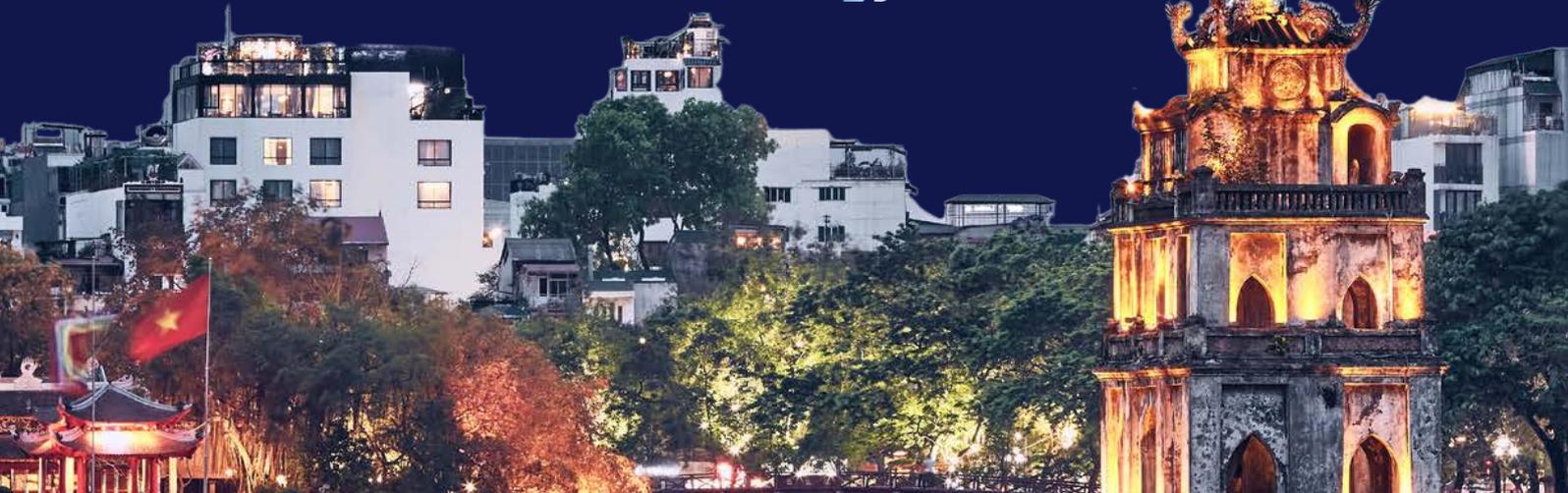


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