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Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today features seven pages of news including a photo page from **Collette**, our **Sustainability** page, plus full pages from:

- **Silversea**
- **Infinity Holidays**

X marks Bangkok

THAI AirAsia X has launched direct flights between Bangkok and Sydney, flagged in Aug (**TD** 21 Aug), connecting Australian guests with services throughout Thailand and the rest of Asia.

The inaugural flight from Bangkok took off over the weekend, and returned from Sydney yesterday, with six weekly flights pegged from launch.

Thai AirAsia X is the only low-cost airline providing direct services from Don Mueang International Airport to Sydney.

XJ serves eight destinations from Bangkok, including Tokyo, Osaka, and Sapporo.

Make 2025 more accessible

SPINAL Life Australia has called on the Federal Government to allocate more funding and resources in 2025 toward making tourism more accessible for people living with disabilities.

Using International Day of People with Disability as a forum to spur change, the advocacy group wants to see next year become the 'National Year of Accessible Tourism', alongside a new national framework.

While the Federal Government has made some progress by implementing a National Disability Plan until 2031 to drive action, Spinal Life Australia believes state and territory governments "generally work to their own disability plans", with some yet to flesh out full details.

"With \$6.8 billion of the spend attributed to those living with disability in Australia, the sheer demand for accessible tourism is clear," the organisation's CEO

Mark Townend said.

"With a further one in six people living with disability globally, this further cements the sizeable market segment and need for further resourcing and funding when it comes to accessible tourism," he added.

People with disabilities account for 18.5 million trips being taken each year in Australia, equating to 23% of all domestic travel.

"We see states like NSW adopting a more ambitious goal of \$91 billion in annual visitor economy expenditure by 2035... but we don't see a continued focus on ensuring this industry is accessible to all Australians," Townend added. **AB**

Rock out with Infinity

INFINITY Holidays is offering unbelievable savings on an unforgettable Rocky Mountaineer journey - see **page nine**.

Nova is now here

SILVERSEA'S luxurious new flagship *Silver Nova* is now sailing in Australia, offering the cruise line's trademark all-inclusive comfort, and its SALT culinary program - more info on **page 8**.

Teiotu exits MSC

BIG changes at MSC Cruises Australia have seen the departure of Country Manager Lisa Teiotu, who has been with the cruise line for five years.

Nicole Costantin is now heading up sales for MSC in Australia, broadening her role from leading the all-inclusive luxury Explora Journeys to also handling day-to-day sales for MSC.

Higher level strategic direction will be managed by Antonio Paradiso, VP Int'l sales for MSC Cruises and Explora Journeys.

The latest development follows the departure of long-time MSC PR Director Leisa Chell last week.



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QF holiday chaos?

BAGGAGE handlers and ground crews servicing Qantas flights in NSW, Qld, SA and Victoria have voted in favour of protected industrial action over better pay and roster conditions.

The Transport Workers Union warned Qantas must come back to the table and negotiate with the 1,000 Dnata workers if the carrier wants to avoid major disruptions to Christmas holiday air traffic later this month.



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Do not hire Mr Jones: TWU

THE Transport Workers Union (TWU) has pledged to support Virgin Australia's recently approved alliance with Qatar Airways (**TD** 29 Nov), so long as the carrier's next Chief Executive Officer is not former Qantas exec Paul Jones (**pictured**).

In a letter to VA, TWU National Secretary Michael Kaine restated strong reservations about Jones taking charge of the Aussie airline, specifically for his key role in a decision to sack workers that was later found to be illegal by the High Court (**TD** 21 Oct).

Jones, who is currently VA's Chief Customer and Digital Officer, is understood to be the final internal candidate vying to replace Jayne Hrdlicka as CEO.

"We want to be supportive of the deal and getting Virgin back to long-haul flying, we want to be constructive and work with the airline, but that attitude will change if Bain decides to appoint Paul Jones," Kaine argued.

Crystal adds to '26

CRYSTAL has unveiled its itineraries for the second half of 2026, which will include scenic voyages through the Adriatic and Ionian seas to ultimate adventures in Alaska.

The luxury cruise line will visit five continents from Jul through Dec, on voyages featuring a number of new ports.

Crystal Symphony will explore 32 countries and 79 ports, marking its return to North America for the first time since 2019, while *Crystal Serenity* will explore will host 18 sailings encompassing 36 countries.



The TWU had previously written to VA's owners Bain Capital to discourage Jones' appointment.

In Jun, Kaine stated that VA's relationship with staff had been recently "deteriorating", and that any repair would not be possible if Jones was to be appointed. **AB**

Ex sells NJE equity

REX has completed the sale of its 50% shareholding in National Jet Express through its subsidiary Air Partners Aviation.

In an update to the ASX yesterday, Rex said the sale was formally completed on 22 Nov to entities controlled by the other existing shareholders of NJE.

These include former Rex Chairman Lim Kim Hai.

Administrators for Rex Group said proceeds from the sale will be used to repay secured debt.



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QR's Grand change

QATAR Airways is ushering in the Qatar Grand Prix with Formula 1-themed onboard dining offerings.

Premium dining options will include F1-themed desserts and chocolates, while economy will enjoy special cutlery and trays.

Curfew lifts, flights to rise

NEW Caledonia has marked a major recover milestone since civil unrest destabilised the island, with local government authorities lifting a curfew that was curtailing tourism in the popular outbound market.

With normality close to restored in the French territory, Aircalin has responded by revealing plans to increase frequencies between Noumea and Sydney and Brisbane in peak periods next year.

During the school holidays in Apr, Jun, Jul, Aug, Sep, and Oct 2025, the carrier will lift flights from two to three times a week from each city.

Aircalin's General Manager for Australia and New Zealand, Chris Thistlethwaite, said both developments are exciting for Australia's outbound market.

"The lifting of the curfew signifies a return to normalcy, and our increased flight schedules during school holidays in 2025 will provide greater flexibility and convenience for travellers," Thistlethwaite said.

"We are delighted to welcome Australians back to New Caledonia, a destination rich in cultural offerings," he added.

Aircalin is also keen for Australian travellers to know that they can fly in style on any New Caledonia trip, with services operated by its two A320Neos, delivered in 2020 and 2019.

The aircraft are equipped with modern seating and advanced LED HD touchscreen



entertainment systems, offering passengers over 90 programs.

New Caledonia will be further boosted by a Qantas decision to restore services to the South Pacific destination later this month, flying E190 jets twice and three times a week from Brisbane and Sydney respectively.

Violent protests erupted in New Caledonia in May over a reform by the French Government to allow newer residents to vote in elections, angering the indigenous population who felt the decision would significantly dilute their political representation. *AB*

WSI gets smarter

WESTERN Sydney International Airport (WSI) and the region's local university are joining forces to boost education, training and job opportunities ahead of the airport's 2026 opening.

Sydney's second int'l airport signed an MoU with Western Sydney University yesterday.

As part of the deal, students have already joined the airport's internship and summer research programs to build their practical skills, as well as participating in a major research project with the airport and its technology partner, DXC Technology.

Mardi Gras packages

SPORTSNET has released a new, one-of-a-kind, exclusive official travel and experiences program for the Sydney Mardi Gras taking place in Feb.

Festivalgoers are offered accommodation and local experiences, as well as tickets.

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Window Seat

SAN Francisco resident Dorothy Smith recently fulfilled her life-long dream of visiting Sydney, completing an impressive journey to every continent in the world in the process.

What made the moment more special was the fact Smith is 102 years old, with Destination NSW and YouTube channel Yes Theory teaming up to make the trip a reality.

"I loved visiting Sydney, it's a beautiful city and the people are charming, the food is good, and the scenery is just wonderful," Smith said.



APT heralds 'a new dawn'



TOUR and cruise operator APT Travel Group has cut the ribbon to its new Melbourne offices, featuring the company's original tour bus at the front.

Located in Moorabbin, the headquarters is "designed to reflect core values while fostering collaboration among team members", and features various meeting areas and creative zones to highlight the brand's portfolio.

"This new space represents more than just a new office - it's a bold investment in our people,"

said CEO David Cox.

Next year, the company will be releasing a number of ambitious initiatives added owner and co-director, Lou Tandy.

"We've got new ships, new marketing, new technology and we kick it all off here with a new office," she teased.

"It really is a new dawn and this office heralds our next phase as a growing and ambitious company."

Pictured marking the opening are: co-owner Rob McGeary, Lou Tandy, and David Cox. *JHM*



TORGAU

Today's issue of *TD* is coming to you courtesy of Viking, aboard a European Christmas markets river cruise.

YESTERDAY our cruise took us to Meissen, the birthplace of European porcelain, where the namesake factory continues to produce amazing works.

A guided tour of the historic facility saw our group given demonstrations of the painstaking creation of these in some cases priceless pieces, which have been perfected over more than three centuries.

We then continued to cruise to Torgau, the meeting place of the Allied forces at the end of WWII, and tonight we will arrive in our final port, Wittenberg, the home of the Reformation.

We're turning Black Friday **Green**

Choose experiences over things.

Green Friday is a movement that raises awareness of the environmental and social impacts of consumerism. This November, ask your clients to consider investing in unique travel experiences. Explore breathtaking destinations, make unforgettable memories, commune with wildlife and nature. Choose a journey that will change the way they see the world.



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Change the way you see the world.



Collette highlights Japan tour at Frontliners in Singapore

AT HELLOWORLD Frontliners this past weekend, Collette unveiled its new 2025/26 small groups program.

Industry veteran and the brand's Head of Sales, David Farrar, shared his candid personal story of visiting Japan on Collette's 'Japan Past and Present' itinerary, which he declared his "best tour ever".

Through the use of his own photos, he reminded agents of the fun of travel and showcased the unique experiences that Collette offers travellers.

Taking it one step further, agents were invited to add a caption to Farrar's pictures for the chance to win a pair of Mikimoto pearl earrings - well done to winner Elisha Tadic.

Farrar also announced that Collette's popular Black Friday Sale (where every single tour is on sale), has been extended to 11 Dec.



AMANDA McCann Wilson, David Farrar, and Karen Deveson at the Collette booth.



RUNNER-UP: "Konnichiwa OMG it's David Farr...ar" - Chloe Huggett, RACQ Travel Eight Mile Plains.

WINNER: "Only bamboo nose where David Farr...ar goes" - Elisha Tadic, Travel and Cruise North East.



RUNNER-UP: "Daggy Dads on tour" - Terry Reymann, RACQ Travel Ipswich.



FARRAR at the famed Mikimoto.



THE Collette team loving all their visitors to their stand at Frontliners.



KONNICHWA from David Far...raaaaar.



SPOTTED! Amy Rowe from Helloworld Lower Templestowe spots her Kawaii pic.



RUNNER-UP: "Nudist Resort" - Michelle Ryan, MTG.



CELEBRATING a fab night is Sarah Gerrand, HLO, Diamond winner Jill Johansen from Helloworld Travel Mackay, and Karen Deveson, Collette.



AUSSIES AHEAD OF KIWIS ON SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL

AUSTRALIANS are more likely to favour responsible practices when travelling than their Kiwi counterparts, new research from Strategic research agency Angus & Associates suggests.

The findings are consistent, not only in attitudes toward sustainable travel, but also in their demonstrated behaviour, the agency stated in its report.

The side-by-side comparison showed that 41% of Australian travellers seek to limit carbon emissions while on holiday by using public transport or cycling or walking, compared to just 32% of New Zealand travellers.

Close to half of Aussies are also deliberately choosing products and services that benefit the local community, compared with just 41% of Kiwis.



Image generated by ChatGPT.

While Aussie travellers are embracing more ways to limit their carbon footprint, both countries were found to be taking positive strides toward meaningful behaviour change.

For example, more than half of all New Zealand and Australian consumers are now willing to pay a premium for a sustainable product or service (relative to the price they might pay for a less sustainable option).

Nearly 30% said they are willing

to pay up to 5% more, while 21% indicated up to 10% more, and 8% said they would fork out even over 10% for the green premium.

Angus & Associates classified 19% of Australian travellers as 'Responsible Travellers', compared with 12% from NZ.

The marker is defined by travellers who not only show a proactive stance towards environmental and community well-being, but also demonstrate a "tangible commitment" through

their actions while on holiday.

The criteria is primarily focused on the pillars of respecting local culture, a commitment to leaving a place in a better state than before, and a determination to safeguard the environment of their travel destination.

"Sustainability should be embedded in the way tourism businesses operate, but it can cost more to provide a sustainable option," Angus & Associates Managing Director Chris Roberts argued.

"This research should give operators some assurance that if they embrace sustainable practices that it will be well-received by their customers.

"It seems certain that this segment of the visitor market will continue to grow," he added. AB

Turtles rescued

LUXURY resort Soneva Jani in the the Maldives has partnered with non-profit organisation Olive Ridley Project to open the Noonu Atoll Sea Turtle Rehabilitation Centre, where animals are being prepared to return to the wild.

Soneva Jani guests are invited to take part in guided tours of the centre, get up close to the animals and learn more about turtle conservation efforts and the rehabilitation process.

Hurtigruten awarded B+ for sustainability in global program

NORWEGIAN-BASED cruise line Hurtigruten has earned a B+ rating in the *Friends of the Earth (FoE) Cruise Ship Report Card*, which evaluates global cruise operators based on their sustainability initiatives.

The company's efforts include a transparent ESG report; a €100m fleet upgrade program to reduce carbon emissions, which includes battery-hybrid upgrades to be implemented on four ships next year; a ban on single-use plastics and heavy oil fuel; and collaborations with local



communities, such as 50 farms, bakeries and producers across Norway.

According to Hurtigruten, the B+ rating was the highest score awarded to any cruise operator this year.

"The cruise industry has long

been a significant polluter, and progress toward further action on sustainability has been too slow," said Hurtigruten CEO, Hedda Felin.

"Comprehensive evaluations like this are essential for holding our industry accountable, and we are proud to be recognised as the top-ranked operator.

"This achievement reflects our unwavering commitment to setting a higher standard for more sustainable travel.

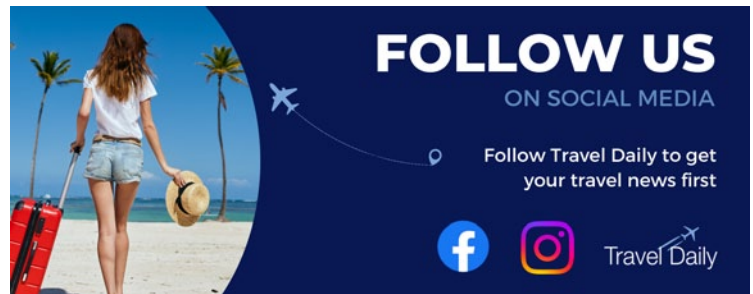
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Agents take a dive into Fiji



1000MTG scholars

1000 Mile Travel Group (1000MTG) has announced two of its North American independent travel advisors as the recipients of its Virtuoso Certified Travel Advisor (VCTA) Scholarships.

Amanda Hietter and Kirsten Billhardt will each receive full tuition for the 2025 VCTA program, a training initiative designed to enhance the expertise of luxury travel advisors.

The intensive program consists of expert-led sessions, real-life scenario training, and mentorship to refine advisors' skills in custom trip planning, client retention, and leveraging the Virtuoso network.

"At 1000 Mile Travel Group, we pride ourselves on supporting advisors dedicated to professional growth and the delivery of exceptional client experiences," said Christy Shafer, 1000 Mile Travel Group Senior Vice President and General Manager.

"Amanda and Kirsten exemplify the calibre of advisor we are proud to have in our network."

AUSTRALIAN travel industry professionals had the opportunity to enjoy Fiji during a post-Luxperience agent fam, hosted by the Unique Tourism Collection.

During their time together, the group visited eco-luxury Jean-Michel Cousteau Resort, where they were met by Jean-Michel himself and his wife, Nancy.

A keen diver and passionate advocate for the oceans, Cousteau shared with the group his insights into the coral and marine underworld surrounding the resort.

He is also the first son of French naval officer and ocean explorer Jacques Cousteau.

UTC is the sales and marketing representative for the resort in Australia and New Zealand.

Pictured: Michelle Slack-Smith, Adventum Travel; Cecilia Allende, Pacific Travel Planners; Jean-Michel Cousteau; Natalie Cherry, Noosa Cruise and Travel; Svetlana Jovanovic, General Manager, UTC; and Nadine Jones, Hawthorn Travel & Cruise. *JHM*

Greenland air boost

A **NEW** international airport in Greenland has opened, offering direct flights to Nuuk from Copenhagen, Denmark for the first time.

Starting from this northern hemisphere winter season, five weekly flights from Nuuk to Copenhagen will operate, increasing to six during the holiday season, and peaking at eight during the summer.

Air Greenland will also offer a direct weekly departure between Nuuk and Aalborg during the summer season.

The Nuuk airport marks the first of three Greenlandic airports opening between now and 2026, all of which will be operated by existing carriers Air Greenland and Icelandair.



Tennis great lands

QATAR Airways has announced Serbian tennis legend Novak Djokovic as its Global Brand Ambassador and Wellness Advisor.

The multi-year pact was unveiled recently at the Altitude Wellness Centre at Al Maha Qatar Airways Crew Accommodation Building.

Djokovic described it "as a pleasure to partner with QR".

"Qatar Airways [is] a company I admire for many years not just for its impeccable service to its customers and employees, but also because it recognises the importance of wellbeing," he said.

MONEY

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

AU\$1 = US\$0.647

THE Australian dollar has softened due to fears of a trade war between China and the United States, treated by US President-elect Donald Trump.

The AUD/USD declined by 0.93% on Mon, with a strengthening US dollar, buoyed by strong economic data out of America, also not helping the Aussies's cause.

The loss snapped a three-day winning streak for the AUD.

Wholesale rates this morning.

US	\$0.647
UK	£0.512
NZ	\$1.101
Euro	€0.617
Japan	¥96.95
Thailand	฿22.35
China	¥4.706
South Africa	11.74
Canada	\$0.909
Crude oil	US\$71.89

Pro-invest CAREs

PRO-INVEST Group has launched a partnership with MAX Employment to create a more inclusive job opportunities for people with disabilities.

The partnership is an extension of Pro-invest's commitment to diversity and inclusion, as part of its Care program.

It will be used to help fill roles across its network.

CEO Jan Smits said Pro-invest is committed to meaningful work opportunities for all abilities.

EDITORIAL

Editor - Adam Bishop

Deputy Editor - Matt Lennon

Cruise Editor - Myles Stedman

Journalists - Janie Medbury

Editor-at-large - Bruce Piper

Publisher - Damian Francis

Associate Publisher - Jo-Anne Hui-Miller

ADVERTISING & MARKETING

Head of Sales & Marketing - Sean Harrigan

Advertising - Laura Aghajanian &

Dante Muranty

advertising@traveldaily.com.au

Head of Operations &

Contributing Editor - Anna Piper

ACCOUNTS

accounts@traveldaily.com.au

Suite 1, Level 2, 64 Talavera Rd

Macquarie Park NSW 2113 Australia

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