



FESTIVE 2025 OUT NOW!

REGISTER FOR THE WEBINAR HERE!



WINNER
TWO YEARS IN A ROW
2023 & 2024
Most Outstanding
Tour Operator Specialised



ALBATROSS
TOURS

Come share our love of Europe

Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today features seven pages of the latest travel industry news, including a photo page from cruise line Viking and our Corporate Update, plus a full page from Ponant.

Tourism outpacing 2019

REVENUE generated by Australia's tourism sector is projected to finish ahead of 2019 volumes, according to a new report compiled by Torrens University Australia.

2024 is expected to notch up \$176.7 billion in income for the country, marginally ahead of pre-pandemic levels, and adding to a rebounding tourism GDP, which last year grew by 76.7%.

The Australian tourism industry outlook 2024 report suggests that numbers have been fuelled by a range of factors, including a rising interest in regenerative travel options, with the emphasis on eco-friendly accommodations and experiences "growing rapidly" over the last three years.

More than 530 organisations in Australia have now signed the Glasgow Declaration for Climate Action in Tourism, which pledges to achieve net-zero emissions across the global sector by 2040.

"In Australia, many hotels and tourism operators are implementing sustainable 'eco-tourism' practices, such as net-zero targets, reducing plastic usage, and combining activities in nature with supporting local conservation," the report stated.

Tasmania, remote parts of the Northern Territory, and Western Australia's Coral Coast were also listed as gaining popularity among travellers, as domestic and international visitors seek more authentic experiences away from crowded tourist spots.

"These regions offer unique cultural encounters and breathtaking natural wonders, providing an escape from urban life," the report noted.

The study also noted hybrid workers booking long-term stays and reshaping travel offerings, while wellness retreats have also been attracting more interest. AB

Sabre re-signs QF

QANTAS has renewed a long-standing retail deal with Sabre Corporation for ongoing distribution of both traditional and NDC content to travel agents through Sabre's marketplace.

The agreement will see both traditional EDIFACT and flexible NDC offers from Qantas available to agents worldwide.

The two parties have a long association, with Sabre being one of the first distribution systems to offer Qantas' NDC content three years ago.

Qantas Executive Manager, Global Sales and Distribution, Kathryn Robertson, said Qantas was focused on enhancing its retailing capabilities to meet the dynamic needs of both travellers and travel agencies.

Sabre Travel Solutions Senior Vice President, Air Distribution, Chris Wilding, said the renewed agreement highlights its commitment to providing travel agents with enhanced flexibility and personalisation in the way they do business.

Christmas savings

AN EXTRA 10% off on more than 150 departures is on offer as a Christmas gift from Ponant.

Valid for booking until 03 Jan, the offer is combinable with all other benefits including Ponant bonus savings and Yacht Club benefits - details on page eight.

collette
GO EVERYWHERE
BLACK FRIDAY SALE

SALE EXTENDED
TILL 11 DECEMBER

UP TO
25% OFF
ALL TOURS
WORLDWIDE

LEARN MORE

*Conditions Apply

OFFER EXTENDED

Wendy Wu Tours

YOUR PARTNER CAN
FLY FREE

OR SOLOS SAVE
50% OFF AIRFARES

DISCOVER MORE

THE ISLANDS OF
TAHITI
AIR TAHITI NUI

SAVE UP TO
\$8,400*
PER COUPLE
Book by
13 Dec 2024

AGENT INCENTIVE: \$150 DIGITAL MASTERCARD

EXPLORE NOW


ENTIRE TRAVEL GROUP

*T&Cs apply

Set your own markup and earn rewards on every booking

1 Million+ hotels | Competitive rates | Local on-ground support

Register now



VA/Air NZ goes live

THE long-awaited codeshare agreement between Virgin Australia and Air New Zealand (TD 26 Aug) has taken off.

Travellers can now directly book Virgin Australia flights operated by Air New Zealand with a VA flight number into Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch for travel from 09 Dec 2024.

Additionally, Virgin Australia guests and Velocity Frequent Flyer members can enjoy rewards when travelling on around 300 services between Australia and New Zealand each week on VA flights operated by Air New Zealand, including Velocity points and lounge access for Velocity gold and platinum members.

VA Chief Strategy and Transformation Officer, Alistair Hartley, said, "this codeshare agreement isn't just about flights - it's about creating seamless travel experiences that give Virgin Australia customers more ways to explore, connect, and adventure".

Air Canada foreshadows booking stability

A CHANGE in passenger booking patterns from Australia has been noted by Air Canada as 2024 comes to an end.

Speaking to *Travel Daily* at a performance of Cirque du Soleil's *Luzia* in Sydney this week (TD yesterday), Air Canada's AU/NZ GM Vic Naughton observed that a trend had emerged this year seeing passengers booking flights later, which "presents challenges in terms of forecasting loads".

"What we saw in 2024 was a change in booking patterns compared to 2023...but the overall demand has not diminished," Naughton said.

"[This] is highly encouraging given external factors such as Australia's economic performance and rising cost-of-living pressures," he added.

Naughton said he was expecting trends to return to normal in the aviation sector in Australia for 2025 after a bumper period



following the pandemic.

"I think 2025 will be a bit more normalised year as we see airlines rationalise capacity and stabilise the market.

"In terms of forward bookings, Air Canada is seeing very strong demand for northern summer bookings, nevertheless I expect to see a continuation of late booking patterns but overall, I am very optimistic for 2025 based on what we are seeing with demand."

MEANWHILE, the new year will see Air Canada revise inclusions in its Basic and Comfort fares to help it better distinguish its fare brands in the market.

Beginning 03 Jan, travellers booking the lowest priced Basic

fare band on routes originating in Canada, the USA, Cuba and the Caribbean will be required to check through their carry-on baggage pre-security, with normal bag fees applicable.

The policy does not apply to fares originating from Australia to Canada or connecting services.

Seat assignment in advance will remain available for a fee or complimentary at check-in, but travellers wishing to change their seat after check-in will then need to pay for their desired seat.

Travellers on the higher Comfort fare will also see changes, with the previous bag allowance of one checked bag increased to two.

IN FURTHER NEWS, AC will grow its Asia-Pacific network from early 2025 with a new service between Vancouver and Manila.

The year-round service marks Air Canada's first Philippines destination, with the route flying four times weekly. DF/ML



SCENIC ECLIPSE



GETAWAY PRESENTS ANTARCTICA

Tune into watch the 1 hour special featuring Scenic Eclipse
Saturday 7 December 4-5PM AEST on the Nine Network on 9 & 9NOW



PRICES FROM \$6,099
PER PERSON TWIN SHARE
LAND ONLY
*Surcharges may apply

Authentic **Botswana**
MOBILE SAFARIS

DURATION: 9 DAYS

[VIEW DEAL](#)

Air NZ flags domestic cuts

AIR New Zealand is reportedly gearing up to reduce its domestic schedule next year, impacting roughly 6,000 bookings.

Customers will be rebooked on services between Feb and Jun to accommodate the planned cuts, which will equate to around 2% of seats on domestic routes.

A spokesperson for the carrier told local NZ media that Wellington will see the largest changes to the schedule,



reflecting a softening in demand from the country's capital.

Aviation expert Irene King told *Stuff Travel* that even if demand to Wellington were to recover, Air NZ would be unlikely to restore capacity as it battles resourcing issues on multiple fronts.

"I suspect that the contraction is pretty convenient for Air New Zealand, I don't think...we will see these services back any time soon and that's because they have got so many severe challenges in terms of human resources, engineering, aircraft availability, on-time performance and the constant cancellations," she said.

"In my view, this is about trying to ensure some form of stability in services that they can provide."

The capacity cuts follow a challenging year for the Kiwi airline, which only last month conceded engine issues would have an adverse impact on H1 2025 earnings (**TD 25 Nov**).

A revised forecast from Air NZ now expects earnings for the H1 period will be in the range of NZ\$120-160 million, and follows a reduced earnings result from NZ\$574 million to NZ\$222 million for the 12 months to 30 Jun 2024.

Increased competition on US routes has also created headwinds for the carrier. **AB**

Delta touches down

BRISBANE Airport has today welcomed Delta Air Lines' direct Los Angeles flights, marking the US carrier's second destination in Australia (**TD 26 Feb**).

The service will operate three times a week using an Airbus A350-900 jet, which features the carrier's Delta One lie-flat business class seats, and cements Brisbane's position as Australia's biggest growth hub to the US.

According to Flight Centre Corporate, Brisbane boasts the most seat capacity into the US compared to the rest of Australia, with Jan 2025 set to deliver around 125% of pre-COVID availability, versus Sydney's 83%.

"This will be the fourth North American aviation giant to touchdown at Brisbane Airport, and for Delta, this will mark its most extensive schedule to the South Pacific in its history," said Flight Centre Corporate COO Melissa Elf.

A CATO Xmas miracle



THE CATO Christmas lunch elevated its status to new heights in Sydney yesterday, surpassing its attendance record from the previous year and celebrating the achievements of the travel sector with plenty of fanfare.

The stylish event at the Sheraton Grand Sydney Hyde Park attracted an impressive 420 guests in CATO's 25th year, with more than \$20,000 worth of prizes given away by Santa Claus himself, courtesy of the event's array of sponsors.

A plethora of \$250 Mastercard gift cards were among the gifts given out as spot draws and for the two best dressed on the day, while winning attendees also scored themselves a mix of luxurious cruises, escorted tours, hotel stays, to name just a few.

CATO Managing Director Brett Jardine opened the proceedings by thanking the industry for all its support of the advocacy body, in addition to detailing some of its big achievements in 2024.

Jardine made particular reference to the ongoing success of the CATO Touring Academy,

which has already certified over 300 agents across close to 5,500 course completions.

Flight Centre Travel Group's CEO Graham Turner also sat down with local G Adventures head Sean Martin to chat about his humble beginnings as a fledgeling tour operator (**pictured**).

Further highlights included Bunnik Tours chief Dennis Bunnik presenting the winner of a photo competition, Contours Travel's Ted Dziadkiewicz.

Travel Daily Editor Adam Bishop emceed the day.

CX debuts Munich

CATHAY Pacific has announced it will launch direct flights to Munich for the first time from 16 Jun 2025.

The Hong Kong carrier will operate four return flights a week, providing an extra way for Aussies to make their way to the German city, and marking CX's second route to Germany alongside daily Frankfurt flights.

The airline will also return to Brussels in summer 2025.

Qantas Christmas Giveaway

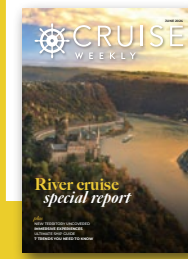
Share your story to win return flights anywhere in Australia

Do you have a story of connection made possible by travel in 2024? We want to hear from you! Share either your story, or one of your customers', and you could win return flights to any Qantas destination within Australia to connect with a loved one.*

[Enter now](#)

*Competition closes 11:59pm (AEDT) on 17 December 2024. T&Cs apply





Discover our River Cruise Special Report

[Click here](#)



Window Seat

UNITED Airlines has partnered with Make-A-Wish to transport deserving children and their families to the 'North Pole', with direct "fantasy flights" from 13 cities around the globe.

After a short trip, either in the air or on the ground, children arrive at Santa's hometown - an airport gate or maintenance hangar that has been transformed into a winter wonderland.

The playful initiative is designed to bring joy and wonder to children during the most magical time of the year.



ATEC Chair steps down

THE Australian Tourism Export Council (ATEC) revealed its new board for 2025 at its annual general meeting this week.

Birgit Bourne from Insight Australia and Kathy Turner from Goway Inbound were both re-elected unopposed to Buyer positions, while Richard Doyle of SeaLink Marine & Tourism was re-elected to the Supplier position.

Addressing members during the AGM, ATEC Managing Director Peter Shelley highlighted the council's achievements in 2024, including the facilitation of 17,000 B2B meetings nationwide, involving over 1,200 delegates.

This year, ATEC also saw more than 4,000 enrolments in its Tourism Training Hub.

"ATEC's achievements this year have worked to support Australia's export tourism sector as it rebuilds through the delivery of critical industry training to expanding market-specific



programs," Shelley said.

"We also continue to successfully connect our members through our extensive business to business events and we remain committed to empowering our members and ensuring the sector's growth in 2025 and beyond."

The AGM was the final one for board Chairman Denis Pierce (pictured), who will now step down after more than a decade in the role.

Plans to appoint a new Chair will be announced in early 2025. JM

Cashed up KKday eyes APAC growth

ASIAN travel experiences platform KKday has raised US\$70 million (A\$109m) in funding and secured new lines of credit as it embarks on an ambitious growth plan in the Asia-Pacific region.

The company said a majority of funds will be spent on mergers and acquisitions in the region to enhance its market position.

Japan is a prime target, with partnerships signed with the country's largest accommodation platform, Jalan, to offer seamless access to 10,000 properties.

Investment will also be made in artificial intelligence projects as it bolsters its tech advantage.

Recruitment will also be a key target as the company aims to lure top-tier talent in key markets to fill senior growth roles.

The investment comes on the back of the company achieving record gross merchandise value through strong market rebounds.

'Spektakulært'

BLACK FRIDAY SALE

Trade Exclusive



The official origin label of Norway

It's not just the views that are spectacular with Hurtigruten's Black Friday Sale. Get up to 50% off Hurtigruten cruises along Norway's famously picturesque coastline when your clients book before **December 9, 2024** and they could witness the Northern Lights at a price that's just as amazing. Or as the locals would say... 'Spektakulært!'

Don't miss out. Call our local Coastal Specialists on 1300 151 548 or visit agentportal.hurtigruten.com

SALE EXTENDED

UP TO **50% off**

HURTIGRUTEN
Live the legend of Norway

Agents discover Viking's Journey to Antiquities

VIKING recently welcomed a select group of travel advisors and their companions aboard the popular 'Journey to Antiquities' ocean voyage.

The journey began with an overnight stay in Athens before embarking on an eight-day sailing to Rome on board the award-winning *Viking Saturn*. Along the way, the group experienced the 'Viking Way of Exploration', uncovering the ancient ruins of Ephesus, walking the volcanic craters of Mt. Etna, the largest active volcano in Europe, and enjoyed authentic Neapolitan pizza in Naples.

Travelling during the Mediterranean's quiet season, the group enjoyed fewer crowds, allowing for a more relaxed exploration of historic towns, vibrant art scenes, and rich culinary traditions.



SHAUN Mifsud, Travel Associates Kew; Angela Unsworth; Joanne Cullen, Viking; Heather and Robert Testro, Hawthorn Travel & Cruise.



PRIVATE dining experience on *Viking Saturn*.



THE perfect view of Mt Etna, Sicily.



ATHENS by e-bike.



MESSINA, Sicily.



CORPORATE UPDATE

FCTG sees China growth

CORPORATE travel between Australia and China is set to soar to new heights on the back of visa-free access of up to 30 days, according to Flight Centre Travel Group's corporate division.

Speaking to *Travel Daily*, Flight Centre Corporate Global COO Melissa Elf said capacity between the two countries was about to surpass pre-pandemic levels for the first time.

"This move means Australian businesses will be able to travel more seamlessly, cost effectively and for longer periods, thanks to the growing demand of corporate and personal travel, and the cutting of red tape," Elf said.

Late last month, China announced it would increase the visa-free travel period granted earlier this year (**TD** 19 Jun) to countries including Australia from 15 days to 30, with the extension running on a trial basis until the end of 2025 (**TD** 28 Nov).

FCTG brands, including FCM Travel and Corporate Traveller, said business travel between Australia and China had grown by 19% year-on-year for the three months ending Sep 2024.

"China's appetite for connectivity to Australia and its willingness to invest in our trade relationship is a clear indicator of its critical importance on both sides, and it is great news for the growing travel demand that Flight Centre Corporate continues to see," Elf added.

"We are leaps and bounds

ahead of what the travel experience was 18 months ago between Australia and China".

Elf expects more corporate travellers adding on 'bleisure' days to take advantage of China's improved access. *ML*

FCM M&E appoints

FCM Meetings and Events, the event management arm of Flight Centre's FCM Travel, has recruited Victoria Deprez as Business Leader for the UK and Ireland.

Based in England, Deprez (**pictured**) brings two decades of experience in the corporate travel and events sector, most recently as the Event Marketing Manager at software company Leapwork, with her CV also including stints at business travel platform Navan and Event Travel Management UK.

The new appointment follows FCM Travel's announcement in Oct that it will pour \$20m into growing FCM Meetings and Events on a global scale - a move that also saw Joanne Shaw join as new Global Director of Enterprise Sales.



Travellers Choice make magic



MORE than 3,500 travel hungry consumers flocked to the inaugural Epic Travel Expo in Canberra recently, co-hosted recently by four enterprising Travellers Choice agencies.

The four agencies - Jamison Travel, Travel Makers, Weston Cruise & Travel and Queanbeyan City Travel & Cruise - are no strangers to working together for mutual benefit, with the event proving to be a massive success.

Backed by more than 70 travel brands, preferred partners and the Travellers Choice head office, the event at Coorong Pavilion ran for five hours and was a booking bonanza, with significant leads and enquiry levels generated.

Back in 2018, a similar event co-hosted by the same four agencies drew 800 people, demonstrating the meteoric rise in enthusiasm for travel among Canberrans.

"By working together, we were able to share the costs, while pooling marketing dollars

and taking advantage of all the various promotional channels we regularly participate in, including social media," said Jamison Travel Director, Michelle Everson.

The four agencies say they plan to repeat the effort in Sep 2025 but plan to aim higher still.

"We're thinking we'll go even bigger, and so are our supplier partners, who are already expressing a desire to invest even more resources into the event," Everson added. *ML*

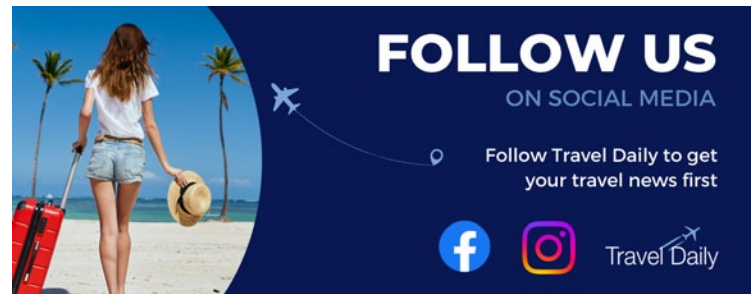
The four agencies and their staff are **pictured** above at the expo.

Rotty summer-ready

ROTTNEST Island has unveiled five new tourism experiences ahead of the summer season, including guided cycling tours, sailing adventures, and beachside wellness programs.

Bookings are also now open for 63 newly refurbished rooms at The Lodge Wadjemup.

OUT NOW:
Travel Tech Special Report
Featuring: AI Evolution: FCTG, CTM, Webjet; The advisor's take on NDC; Payment trends you need to know, and more.
CLICK HERE to download.



FOLLOW US
ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Follow Travel Daily to get your travel news first



SPECIALS

Send your special deals to:
specials@traveldaily.com.au

Dorsett Melbourne has kicked off its 'Soak Up The City' summer promotion, offering 20% off stays between now and 30 Jun 2025 for travellers who book directly through the hotel's website before 28 Feb 2025. Additionally, Dorsett Your Rewards members will enjoy an extra 12-32% off their stay. The offer also includes 15% of the bill at Jin Bar, along with free early check-in and late check-out. Learn more [HERE](#).

Cruisers can save up to \$8,000 per suite on voyages with **Silversea**, which has announced its 2025 wave season offer. The deal applies to new bookings made between now and 28 Feb, on sailings like the 11-night British Isles itinerary from Copenhagen to Southampton. Wave offer pricing for this voyage is available from \$13,600 per guest for door-to-door fares, and \$10,300 per guest for port-to-port fares, based on double occupancy. Find out more [HERE](#).

The iconic **Hydro Majestic** in the Blue Mountains has unveiled its NYE package to ring in 2025 in style. From \$1,149, travellers can enjoy two nights' accommodation in a Heritage Room, along with an extravagant five-course New Year's Eve degustation dinner at Wintergarden Restaurant, which includes a glass of sparkling on arrival and live entertainment, followed by breakfast the next morning. More details can be found [HERE](#).

With **Crystal's** new upgrade offer, travellers can enjoy a free suite upgrade, one night's pre- or post-cruise hotel accommodation, and complimentary laundry services. Book a Double Guest Room and be upgraded to an Aquamarine Veranda Suite, or book an Aquamarine and be upgraded to a Sapphire Veranda Suite. The offer applies on select voyages in 2025 and 2026, for bookings made by 02 Feb 2025. [CLICK HERE](#) to find out more.

To celebrate **TFE Hotels** officially doubling its footprint in New Zealand on 01 Dec, the hospitality company has released a special opening sale on four of its New Zealand hotels - Adina CityLife Wellington, Adina CityLife Auckland, Adina Heritage Christchurch and Rendezvous Heritage Auckland. Guests who book a two-night stay at one of these hotels between now and 21 Sep 2025 will save 20% off the best available rate. Call 13 86 42 for more details.

Aussies can save \$250 per person off selected 2025 departures to the UK and Europe thanks to new promotion from **Back-Roads Touring**. For more information, [CLICK HERE](#).

Adventurers can save up to \$3,750 per person twin share on select **Abercrombie & Kent** 2025 Luxury Small Group Safaris to Kenya and Tanzania. For example, embark on the 14-day 'Great Migration Safari in Style', which features game drives through the region's most abundant parks and private reserves. Book before 31 Dec - more details [HERE](#).

EK plays doubles with MEL



EMIRATES has renewed a longstanding commercial deal with Tennis Australia to remain the official airline of the Australian Open Grand Slam until 2029.

As part of the five-year deal, the airline will invest \$2.25 million into tennis programs for young and disadvantaged children.

The deal will see tennis clinics and structures introduced in five Australian cities to nurture rising talent and inspire young people.

The airline will again feature prominently at next month's event with a range of activities

for tennis fans of all ages. *ML Pictured* above is Emirates President, Sir Tim Clark, with Tennis Australia CEO, Craig Tiley.

Back to normal in Jan

GLOBAL tourism is set for a full recovery by end of the year, with spending growing faster than arrivals, according to UN Tourism.

As revealed by the latest *World Tourism Barometer*, a full recovery from the biggest crisis in the sector's history is expected by the end of the year, despite economic, geopolitical, and climate challenges.

Around 1.1 billion tourists travelled internationally in the first nine months of 2024, as the global tourism sector recovered to 98% of pre-pandemic levels.

Most regions are already exceeding 2019 arrival numbers in the Jan to Sep 2024 period.

The report also shows outstanding results in terms of international tourism receipts, with most destinations posting double-digit growth compared to 2019, described as "excellent news" by UN Tourism Secretary-General Zurab Pololikashvili.

NCL catches Wave

NORWEGIAN Cruise Line (NCL) has announced new resources to support travel advisors this wave season, with a new Wave Hub.

Key resources for the new asset include Norwegian Central, a go-to platform for booking tools, marketing assets, and specialised training through NCLU.

There will also be a 'Book-a-BDM' function, allowing travel advisors to directly access tailored advice on campaigns, promotions, group booking benefits, and more - [CLICK HERE](#).



This holiday season,
**GIFT YOUR CLIENTS
AN EXTRA
10% SAVING!***

[VIEW SELECT DEPARTURES](#)

Valid until January 3, 2025, your clients can enjoy an **additional 10% saving on over 150 departures!***

This offer is combinable with all other benefits and advantages, including PONANT Bonus savings and PONANT Yacht Club benefits*.

Whether it's exploring the icy wonders of the Antarctic Peninsula, the rugged beauty of the Kimberley, the idyllic Greek islands, or the mystical Norwegian fjords, now is the time to make their holiday dreams come true.



1300 737 178 | au.ponant.com | reservations.aus@ponant.com

*Offer is valid on a selection of 2024, 2025 and 2026 departures, for new bookings made between 25 November 2024 and 3 January 2025 inclusive. Offer is not retroactive, is subject to availability and may be removed at any time. Offer is not available on any *Le Commandant Charcot* and *Le PONANT* departures. Offer is combinable with PONANT Yacht Club discounts, Join the Club Offer, the PONANT Bonus, and Back-to-Back discounts. Offer is not combinable with any Flight Credit offers, Free Single supplement, Shipboard Credit or any other offer. To take advantage of this offer, please contact your travel agent or our cruise consultants and quote the code «XMAS24». Other terms and conditions may apply. Photograph: © Studio PONANT - Vutheara Kham.