

## Today's issue of TD

*Travel Daily* today features five pages of all the latest travel industry news, as well as a full page from **Regent Seven Seas Cruises**.

## NCL's half-price deal

**NORWEGIAN** Cruise Line (NCL) has slashed up to 50% off the price of its sailings in a new limited-time offer, which also includes a US\$200 onboard credit as well as the brand's 'Free at Sea' promotion.

The deal is available for new bookings made between 08-20 Feb, and applies to worldwide cruises including those that visit Hawaii and Europe - **CLICK HERE** for more information.

## TIME feeling Minty

**APPLICATIONS** are now open for a Travel Industry Mentor Experience scholarship, provided courtesy of Mint Payments.

The scholarship will cover full tuition for one applicant into Program 56, which begins 23 Apr. Scholarship applications close 22 Mar - **CLICK HERE** to apply.

All Australian travel industry employees with at least one year of experience are eligible to apply for the program, which provides career guidance and support.

Mint Payments co-founder Alex Teoh shared the company is "proud to be supporting the growth and development of the next generation of travel industry leaders".

## Time to Pay on Delay

A **NEW** Bill being brought by Opposition Senator Bridget McKenzie is seeking to provide consumers with greater protection from cancelled and delayed flights via a new compensation scheme.

Dubbed the 'Pay on Delay' Bill, McKenzie said the proposed legal change would make clear that a passenger's ticket is for a specific flight at a specific time, and appears to be a direct rebuke of Qantas' "bundle of rights" defence tabled last year in the face of legal action undertaken by the ACCC (**TD** 30 Oct 2023).

"The 'Pay on Delay' Bill is designed to clean up Australia's airline industry through ensuring concrete protections for passengers to, from and within Australia," McKenzie contended.

A long-time critic of Qantas, McKenzie also claimed such a Bill was needed because the Federal Government had failed in its duty

to protect Aussie travellers from hawkish Qantas policies.

"The Albanese Government has...instead spent the past 18 months running a protection racket for Qantas who represent more than 60% of the Australian airline industry," she argued.

Both Qantas and Virgin Australia made it clear in their Aviation Green Paper submissions that a compensation scheme, similar to what has been introduced by the European Union, would not be a positive move for local aviation.

"Blunt penalty regimes like the EU's passenger compensation scheme risk leading to increased fares, but not necessarily improved customer outcomes or operational performance," VA said in its submission.

QF also indicated mandatory compensation would be a "backwards step", would do nothing to solve delays, and would likely increase ticket prices. **AB**

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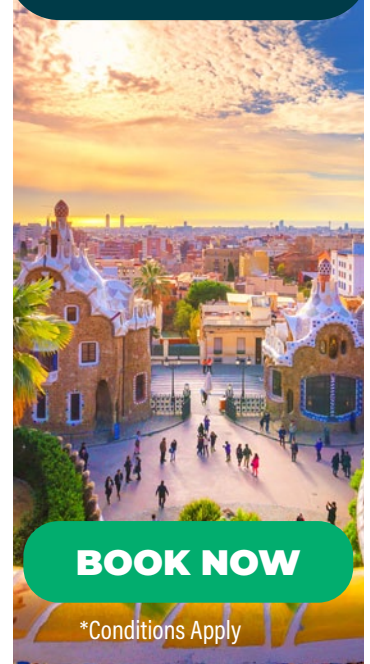


## Upgrade with RSSC

**REGENT** Seven Seas Cruises (RSSC) is offering US\$500 Shipboard Credit per suite for guests who book up to a Penthouse Suite on any 2024 voyage before 15 Feb.

Cruisers can also enjoy a free two-suite category upgrade until 29 Feb - see the **back page**.

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## Return of the Macfarlane

**FORMER** Magellan Travel Group CEO and General Manager, Andrew Macfarlane, has been coaxed out of retirement to take a new role as Purpose Specialist AU/NZ for Intrepid Travel.

In his new role, Macfarlane (pictured) has been tasked with furthering Intrepid’s reputation as a trusted and recognised corporate purpose leader in Australia and New Zealand.

Macfarlane, whose CV also includes roles with STA Travel and



Jetstar across three decades of experience, is perhaps best known as having played a key role in the growth of Magellan Travel Group, helping the business amass a network of 125 agencies before it was acquired by Helloworld six years ago (TD 02 Mar 2018).

Intrepid Travel Managing Director, Brett Mitchell, said Macfarlane’s “experience and broad industry knowledge, we know he will help Intrepid reach our goal of becoming the most trusted and recognised corporate purpose leader in ANZ”. ML

## Collette Euro deals

**TRAVELLERS** can enjoy up to 15% off the price of any Collette European tour during the brand’s ‘Summer in Europe’ pre-sale.

Discounts can be secured on new retail bookings made before 26 Feb for departures between 01 May-31 Aug and 01 Oct-31 Dec.

The offer code to avail the deal when booking is ‘EUROPE 24’.

## MEL record Month

**MELBOURNE** Airport has experienced its busiest month since the end of the pandemic, with over three million passengers passing through its terminals in Dec last year.

The hub also set a new all-time monthly record of 4,976 international flights, as well as marking the first time since Jan 2020 that int’l pax numbers surpassed one million.

**MEANWHILE**, the airport is preparing to roll out a WeChat interface for Chinese visitors, which will offer recommendations for exploring Victoria.

## Albatross guarantees

**ALBATROSS** Tours has announced all its 2024 Europe and UK Summer Tours are now guaranteed departures.

It is also offering agents the chance to win a tour for two valued at over \$14,000 for every booking deposited before 28 Mar.

**HOBART**

Today’s issue of TD is coming to you courtesy of Silversea, who are hosting us aboard *Silver Muse* this week.

**EXCITEMENT** is building as we prepare to embark *Silver Muse* this afternoon, ahead of her sailing from Hobart to Melbourne this week.

The 596-passenger ultra-luxury vessel pairs small-ship intimacy with spacious all-suite accommodation.

This evening we will take some time to explore the beautiful ship, before enjoying a pre-dinner drink in the Panorama Lounge and eating at one of the eight dining venues on board.

Tune in this week for more updates as we sail.

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## Meet Seibu Prince

STAYWELL Hotels, which represents brands including Park Regis, Prince Hotel and Leisure Inn has been folded into a new organisational structure by its Japanese parent firm, Seibu Prince Hotels Worldwide.

The new umbrella company, now known as Seibu Prince Hotels and Resorts, also incorporates Seibu Prince Hotels and Prince Resorts Hawaii.

All hotels under the three banners have now come together on a single reservations website, unlocking a global inventory of more than 26,000 rooms.

At the same time, a new loyalty program known as Seibu Prince Global Rewards loyalty program will also be introduced.

Members of existing loyalty programs operating outside of this, such as StayWell Rewards and Prince Preferred, will see their membership and points balances merged into the new program from 01 Apr.

## Swift lifts NSW economy

NSW is anticipating a big boost to its visitor economy thanks to mega pop star Taylor Swift, who is bringing her hotly anticipated The Eras Tour Down Under this month.

More than 100,000 Swifties from intrastate, interstate and overseas are expected to descend on Sydney, injecting more than \$80 million in visitor expenditure during the concert period.

According to Accommodation Australia, hotels across Sydney are already 84% full for the four back-to-back nights that Swift is performing at Accor Stadium, with Chief Executive Michael Johnson saying "2023 was the biggest Feb hotels have seen in years and Taylor has topped it".

"Major events like these are a boon for hotels and a huge boost for the visitor economy... whatever you think of her music, everyone in NSW should be thanking her for coming."

Ovolo Hotels Australia is just



one of the accommodation operators reaping the benefits, with Marketing Manager Toby Franklin sharing "we have never witnessed such a surge in demand at Ovolo Hotels during this period, particularly attributed to a single artist".

Destination NSW has created *The Ultimate Swiftie Guide to Sydney* (available [HERE](#)), which includes advice "on the best ways to enjoy the city, Swiftie-style".

MEANWHILE, Bonza is also enjoying the Swift effect, with most of the low-cost carrier's flights from regional Australia into Melbourne now fully booked ahead of the *Bad Blood* singer's arrival on 17 Feb. JM

## Selling the World

"SELL the World" with Infinity Holidays and earn up to 4% extra commission on hotel bookings.

Travel advisors can earn extra commission on hotels booked through packages in Feb and Mar with travel dates before Sep.

The Sell the World campaign features dozens of packages around the globe, which are all fully customisable and packed with perks.

"We're showcasing the best packages and itineraries from around the world that there is to offer," GM James Whiting said - [CLICK HERE](#) for more info.

## Batik clarification

BATIK Indonesia will only temporarily reduce frequencies on its Adelaide-Bali route and not pull out of the service, as was reported in [TD](#) on Fri.

The carrier's lower volume of flights will return to four times weekly from 31 Mar.

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## Li Zhang sentenced

A **LONG-RUNNING** conspiracy case to defraud the Australian Government of \$15 million in tax income in relation to a luxury resort in NSW has finally been resolved, with fraudster Li Zhang sentenced to 10 years in prison.

According to *Business News Australia*, Zhang fled Australia for New Zealand in 2009 following audits carried out by the Australian Tax Office found he used inflated and false invoices to reduce his GST liability, before being extradited back in 2019.

The invoices related to a contract to build a luxury resort and golf course in the Hunter Valley for IHG Hotels over 20 years ago - a property now managed by Rydges.

Zhang will now serve a minimum non-parole period of nearly seven years, with former colleague Peter Chang also convicted in the scam.

## DL enhances lounges

**DELTA** Air Lines is preparing to introduce new premium lounge experiences at three US airports, including JFK, LAX, and Boston Logan International Airport.

JFK will host the inaugural premium lounge, which will feature a full-service brasserie and a casual, chef-assisted market with open kitchens, dedicated wellness areas, and more.

The American carrier is also set to debut Delta Sky Club in Charlotte, add a second lounge in Seattle, as well as expand existing lounges in Miami and New York's LaGuardia Airport.

## Qld Govt props up Lindeman



**THE** Queensland Government has delivered a cash grant to the owners of Lindeman Island, Wells Smart Group, to restore the once-popular tourist attraction to its former glory.

Flagged for a major redevelopment project last year (**TD** 05 Apr 2023), further details released over the weekend show the upcoming 210-room, five-star property will feature a restaurant, bar, pool, spa and gym, a nine-hole golf course, as well as two 19m catamarans to ferry guests.

"We believe this grant is a great boost in confidence and will become a pivotal step towards the makeover of Lindeman Island resort," Wells Smart Group Director, Tony Jia, said.

"Club Med Lindeman Island was once an iconic destination for Australia but has been abandoned since 2012, it is very unfortunate to witness such a stunning island getting forgotten but this grant marks the beginning of an exciting journey,

and we will proudly announce that Lindeman Island will become a beacon of sustainable development," he added.

It has been a tumultuous period for Queensland island resorts, with a number of owners accused of allowing assets to fall into disrepair and harming the state's tourism strategy of rapidly expanding its island appeal.

Lindeman is one of five projects chosen to share in round one of the state government's Growing Future Tourism Fund, with the island resort on track to be opened in 2026. **AB**

## Viking NZ sessions

**VIKING** has opened registration in New Zealand for Explorer info sessions commencing on 28 Feb.

The sessions are scheduled to be hosted in 31 locations across both the North and South islands between Feb and Jul, with a focus on educating agents in smaller NZ communities - register **HERE**.



## Window Seat

A **RATHER** stinky issue has arisen at Mount Everest, forcing authorities to announce an unpleasant new rule for those wishing to climb the world's tallest peak.

Adventurers are now required to clear up their own poo and take it back to base camp to be disposed of, under a new measure introduced by the Nepalese municipality of Pasang Lhamu, which covers most of the region around Mount Everest.

Tonnes of excrement has built up on the landmark in recent years due to the extreme cold preventing it from fully degrading.

"We are getting complaints that human stools are visible on rocks and some climbers are falling sick...this is not acceptable and erodes our image," Lhamu said.

A spokesperson said travellers will need to purchase biodegradable bags at base camp to put their waste into during expeditions, which can take weeks, and then submit the bags for checking upon their return.



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## WA shows what its got



**WESTERN** Australia has held its first India Roadshow since the pandemic, with three days of meetings taking place last week with India-based tourism, travel and trade partners.

Hosted by Tourism WA and Business Events Perth, the trade event saw 16 of the state's hotels, attractions, experiences and regional tourism organisations showcase their offerings to more than 300 Indian agents in New Delhi and Mumbai.

Carolyn Turnbull, Tourism WA's Managing Director, shared "India

is one of our fastest recovering markets post-pandemic".

"Now is a crucial time for us to strengthen our relationships with in-market agents to leverage this potential and ensure we are maximising the growth of this market," she explained.

India is currently WA's seventh largest international market by visitor numbers. *JM*

## Moxy in Canada

**MARRIOTT** Bonvoy has announced the debut of its Moxy Hotels brand in Canada, with the opening of the 160-key Moxy Halifax Downtown.

The hotel offers easy access to Halifax's vibrant downtown scene, and is close to the coastal city's best retail outlets, spas, galleries, parks and concert venues.

The industrial-chic bedrooms feature modular furniture, motion-activated LED lights, 55-inch flat screen TVs, and more, while guests can also use the 24/7 gym, savour an extensive list of cocktails, wines and local brews at Bar Moxy, and enjoy a grab-and-go snack or drink at Moxy Pick-Ups at any hour of the day or night.

## La Vie appoints

**LA VIE** Hotels & Resorts has named Sam Giles as General Manager of its boutique hotel in Sydney, 202 Elizabeth, which opened last year.

The appointment comes as the hotel management company aims to grow its boutique hotel portfolio across Asia Pacific, particularly Australia.

Giles was most recently Area Manager for Salter Brothers, and prior to that racked up 13 years as Regional General Manager at Spicers Retreats.

## BROCHURES

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**Railbookers - South America by Rail**  
The latest brochure from Railbookers offers plenty of inspiration for travellers who wish to explore South America via rail in 2024 or 2025. There are several exciting trips featured in the 24-page guide, including the 14-day 'The Wonders of Peru and The Andean Explorer', which includes two nights travelling through the Peruvian Highlands onboard the luxurious Belmond Andean Explorer. The itinerary also features accommodations and exclusive tours in Lima, the Sacred Valley, Machu Picchu, Cusco, and Arequipa. Those who are

looking to incorporate a cruise into their holiday will love the 'Grand Tour of Peru' offering which is also showcased in the brochure, and includes a three-night Amazon cruise on board luxury river cruise ship *Aqua Nera*. The 21-day itinerary also features a rail journey through the dramatic Peruvian Andes, complete with a delicious gourmet three-course lunch with wine and afternoon tea.



**Fun Over 50 Holidays - 2024 Edition**  
Featuring 15 new itineraries for this year, Fun Over 50 Holidays has released a new brochure which encompasses its comprehensive tour offering across Australia as well as a selection of international destinations. Adventurers over the age of 50 won't have any trouble finding something to suit their unique preferences, whether it's a glamping experience in outback Queensland or a grand tour of Tasmania. The brochure also details the operator's festival and events itineraries, which now includes the Stanthorpe Apple

& Grape Harvest Festival in addition to ever-popular options like the Parkes Elvis Festival and Vivid Sydney. New for this year is the six-day 'Bellingen Valley Beauty' tour, where guests will see the picturesque coastal town come alive with the vibrant colours of autumn, enjoyed guided rainforest walks and travel through winding mountain roads.



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