

Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today features six pages of news including our **Corporate Update**, plus a full page from **TAFE NSW**.

Banyan Down Under

BANYAN Group has chosen SLC Representation Australia to represent it in the Australian and New Zealand markets.

The new partnership will help boost the boutique hospitality brand's presence Down Under, and also includes its sister brands Angsana and Cassia.

The announcement comes as Banyan Group celebrates its 30th anniversary, with the company linking up with SLC to host two evening receptions in Australia, bringing together key travel trade professionals for networking, drinks, food, music and prizes.

Tickets to the celebration in Sydney on 23 Jul can be booked **HERE**, while the Melbourne event has already sold out.

Board ructions at Rex

FORMER Rex Airlines chief Lim Kim Hai has sensationally moved to have four directors removed from the board, including long-standing leader John Sharp.

In an update to the ASX this morning, Rex's parent group, Regional Express Holdings, confirmed that Lim, who had only stepped down from the CEO role in early Jun (**TD 06 Jun**), had exercised his right as a more-than 5% shareholder to call for a general meeting to remove directors and appoint fresh faces on the board.

Under sections 203D and 249D of the *Corporations Act 2001*, Lim wants to remove John Sharp, Lee Thian Soo, Ronald Bartsch, and Jim Davis as directors, and instead appoint Lim Kang Song and Mukul Soul to the board.

Lim has also requested that any person appointed director of the company on or after 05 Jul until the end of the general meeting,

other than Song or Soul, be removed from the board.

The major development follows a big board shake-up for Rex in Jun, which saw Lim step down from the CEO position and Neville Howell take control, who had been the COO for 10 years.

In the update in Jun, it was noted that Lim would remain as a Non-Executive Director and a major shareholder in the airline.

When contacted by **Travel Daily** for comment this morning, Rex declined to add anything further to the ASX update.

Rex said it would comply with the general meeting request made by Lim and update the market in due course.

The latest developments also follow Rex having to respond to ASX inquiries in May about why the company did not disclose Lim's brother-in-law relationship to Thian Tjoa during its purchase of NJE in 2022. **AB**

Get in quick for NTIA

NOMINEES for a Most Popular Award at the 2024 NTIAs only have until 5pm today to finish their voting profiles.

The process is quick and is needed for the nom to proceed.

Alliance, BHP shift

ALLIANCE Aviation has announced it will no longer provide full-time services for BHP's Nickel West, instead shifting to care and maintenance by Dec.

In an update on the ASX this morning, the regional airline said the number of flights will reduce over time starting from Oct, and estimates a full-year impact of around \$3-4 million at the EBITDA level for FY25.

Study tourism now

ENROLMENTS are now open for Semester 2 at TAFE NSW, which is highlighting its wide range of travel and tourism courses - for info, see **last page**.



THREE AGENTS WILL WIN \$5,000 & A VIKING VOYAGE FOR TWO

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Top End chases flights

THE Northern Territory Government has allocated extra funding to attract more air routes in Australia and from overseas.

Announced late yesterday, the new tourism package will inject a further \$16 million into its Aviation Attraction Scheme, which was launched in Jul last year (**TD** 21 Jul 2023).

The scheme, designed to accelerate much-needed flight connectivity to the Top End, has already secured 334,000 new seats through to 30 Jun 2026.

Encouragingly, that number does not include any seats that were to be provided by Bonza.

“This new funding will provide certainty for airlines and open up the potential for more new routes to the Territory from interstate and overseas destinations,” NT Chief Minister, Eva Lawler, said.

“This increased investment is on top of the \$10 million already allocated to the scheme for the

2024-25 and 2025-26 financial years,” she added.

In addition to chasing more air routes, the Top End is sinking an extra \$2 million into the Territory Tourism Discount Scheme, which provides 25% off select experiences and packages up to the value of \$5,000.

The first tranche includes \$1m for discounted bookings made in Sep, which can be used for experiences and packages in Central Australia between Oct 2024 to Mar 2025.

Top End packages can also be booked from Oct for travel between Feb and Mar 2025, with the broader aim of supporting NT tourism operators during the slower wet season.

The new tourism support package supplements the NT Government’s \$68 million investment in the tourism sector, delivered as part of the 2024-25 Budget - more on the NT on **p4**.

Travel brands team up



AMAWATERWAYS, Celebrity Cruises and DriveAway teamed up this week to train a group of travel agents based in Northern New South Wales.

Twelve agents from around the region came together on a brisk morning in Ballina for in-depth training with the three brands.

“At first glance it may look a strange combination of brands working together, but it also showcased how your clients’ holidays are the sum of many parts - both cruising and land,” Amawaterways’ Regional Sales Manager, Christine Oliver, said.

“It doesn’t have to be an either

or situation,” she added. **JM**

Now full of new knowledge, the agents are **pictured** with Oliver, Celebrity’s Maggie Silva, and DriveAway’s Claire Turner.

Ingenia is thriving

THRIVE PR has won the account for Ingenia Holidays, and will now represent the holiday experience provider across Australia.

Ingenia offers a diverse range of accommodation options around the country, including resort-style stays, glamping, caravan and camping sites, eco-conscious accommodation, and more.

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Celebrating Bastille Day

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Air NZ beefs up the Pacific

AIR New Zealand is set to boost its capacity to a range of Pacific destinations, adding tens of thousands of seats from Nov.

The increase represents a 9% rise in available seats and applies across key routes experiencing growth, including Auckland to Samoa (13,000 additional seats), Auckland to Nadi (12,000 more seats), and Auckland to Tonga (7,000 extra seats).

Chief Customer and Sales Officer, Leanne Geraghty, is

encouraging customers to take advantage of the expanded service and enjoy more of the beach this summer.

The airline's new 'Seats to Suit' offering on international short-haul flights delivers passengers free movies, snacks, and flexible travel options.

MEANWHILE, Air New Zealand has introduced a new beverage menu featuring top New Zealand spirits and craft beers.

The selection, available onboard all flights and in select lounges, includes offerings from Scapegrace Classic Gin, Reefton Distillery Co., Wild Rain Vodka, and ParrotDog Craft Beer.

In further news, Air New Zealand's Annual Shareholders' Meeting will be held in Christchurch on 26 Sep, where nominations for new directors will be heard. *JG*

Accor Plus promo

NEW members of the Accor Plus loyalty program can receive 2,000 Reward points and 20 status nights as a welcome bonus if signing up by 21 Jul.

Bonus reward points equate to around A\$65 which can be spent with a range of partners including restaurants, hotels and other travel experiences.

[CLICK HERE](#) for more details.

NAIDOC delicacies

VIRGIN Australia is celebrating NAIDOC Week by offering a range of products sourced from Indigenous suppliers across its national lounge network.

Items include native granola, wattleseed and chocolate chip cookies, lemon myrtle shortbread and matching beverages.

Travellers can partake in the special treats until this Sun 14 Jul.

Collette shows '25

TRAVEL agents are invited to join Collette to celebrate its 107th touring season at the 2025 Season Showcase events to be held across Australia.

The company has close to doubled its number of sales events in recent years, now at 23 locations, and follows a very successful engagement in 2023.

Collette's showcase will feature the latest in classic and small group itineraries, and will provide guests with food and beverages.

NCL sails into Brissy



NORWEGIAN Cruise Line (NCL) recently supported Cruiseabout at its annual conference at Flight Centre Travel Group's head office in Brisbane.

Close to 40 travel advisors attended the event, which saw sellers hear from NCL about its value proposition, as well as the line's partner, Visit Seattle.

The destination management organisation promoted sailings from Seattle and pre-cruise tours to advisors.

NCL departs from Seattle between Apr and Oct with a choice of ships including *Norwegian Bliss*, *Norwegian Encore*, and the recently refreshed *Norwegian Joy*.

A three-day pre-cruise tour is also available in Seattle, which includes an exploration of the city's highlights, hotel accommodation, and transfers.

Pictured skipping the informative session are NCL Business Development Manager Craig McLaurin; Cruiseabout General Manager Brad Kennedy, Head of Operations Kelly Neri, Captain of Marketing Andrea Burgess, & Head of Product Brooke Rand; and Visit Seattle representative Amanda McCoy.

MEANWHILE, trade partners can earn 'Double Dollars' on any Americas booking with Norwegian in Jul and Aug - call 1300 255 200 to book. *MS*

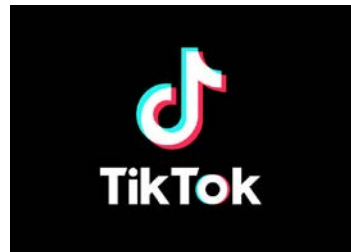
Max reels in TikTok

TIKTOK will be represented at Maximum Occupancy Australia, marking the social media platform's debut at an Australian hotel and accommodation industry conference (*TD* 13 Jun).

The event's organisers have just confirmed 40 more speakers, including food & beverage and hospitality venue operator Merivale, and some of Australia's newest accommodation brands, including Lylo.

"The speaker line-up is the widest variety of all types of accommodation of any accommodation industry conference in APAC," said event organiser Adrian Caruso of Fastrack Digital.

Maximum will take place at the Fullerton Hotel Sydney from 22-23 Jul - for more details or to secure your ticket, [CLICK HERE](#).



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Buckingham tours

FOR the first time, the public will be allowed inside the Buckingham Palace's east wing following a 10-year, multi-million dollar re-servicing program, which features the iconic balcony where royals have appeared over the years for national events.

Groups of up to 20 visitors will be able to tour the wing for £75 (A\$143) from next week, where they can take in the Centre Room behind the balcony, the Yellow Drawing Room, the Royal Pavilion, and the Principal Corridor.

No arrival duty free

THAILAND plans to close down all duty-free retail stores in the arrivals area of eight international airports in an effort to boost in-destination spending by visitors.

It is the second move this week aimed at elevating the country's tourism expenditure, following plans to repeal a 52-year-old ban on afternoon booze (TD 09 Jul).

No hit to the Alice, yet

EXCLUSIVE

THIS month is expected to be one of the best tourism seasons in several years in Central Australia, AAT Kings Group CEO Ben Hall told TD, despite ongoing unrest in Alice Springs.

Confidence and guest numbers have been returning to Central Australia recently, Hall confirmed, making last week's assault of four off-duty police officers a disappointment (TD 09 Jul).

"The peak season is now...and confidence and guest numbers were returning, so this is a setback, but we do believe it will be a short-term one," he said.

"People are eager to visit Alice Springs, and demand is gradually coming back, so while this may slow down the recovery slightly, we are hopeful it is just for a brief period," Hall added.

Since the COVID-19 pandemic, demand to Central Australia has not recovered as quickly as other

destinations for AAT Kings, due to a variety of reasons.

"Demand has certainly been down, but this is due to various factors...including limited and expensive air access.

"Operating a tour business in and to/from Alice Springs has been challenging for several years...resulting in fewer guests starting or ending their trips [in Central Australia].

"However, we've seen positive growth in demand with Virgin Australia introducing flights to Uluru from Melbourne and Brisbane," Hall added.

The AAT Kings head said it is crucial for Alice Springs to remain a strong tourism centre and a gateway to Central Australia, as many businesses depend on tourism directly and indirectly.

"Many businesses in Alice Springs rely primarily on tourism, so we need to support them." MS See more news on NT on p2.



Window Seat

WHILE most travellers know it isn't a very good idea to pack explosives in their luggage, one man didn't think twice about chucking a couple of grenades in his suitcase.

While they were thankfully inert, the 41-year-old man from Kanazawa, Japan, failed to inform officials about the replicas before he passed through security screening at Hawaii's Hilo International Airport early this week.

Understandably, officers called the bomb squad and evacuated the terminal area, according to a Hawaii Police Department statement, which forced the airport to pause operations for about an hour.

After being arrested and later released, hopefully the traveller has learnt his lesson.

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CORPORATE UPDATE

Virtual biz card tie-up

DIGITAL corporate card issuer Pliant is expanding the use of its virtual card for business travel payments, partnering with payments tech brand Conferma.

The two will cooperate on innovative virtual travel payments for the corporate travel sector, enabling virtual cards, generated by Conferma, to be issued through Pliant's app.

Chief Commercial Officer for Conferma, Sonya Geelon, said the partnership builds on the existing investment into the tech's platform, which allows it to connect more businesses to enable commerce."

"We have a long history in the travel payments space, which makes us acutely aware that travel changes, and it's the role of payments to keep up," she said.

"Users demand flexibility and by partnering with innovative digital card issuers such as Pliant, we are able to offer unrivalled choice.

"Pliant is an incredibly exciting company, driving corporate card payments forward with innovative tech solutions that make payments simpler."

Chief Executive Officer for

Pliant Malte Rau added: "we're so pleased to partner with a recognised leader in the travel payments space, which has been our focus, and a huge driver of our product innovation.

"Our partnership with Conferma gives companies in the travel industry even more flexibility and capabilities when it comes to making payments, and we can't wait for customers to start experiencing these benefits." *MS*

New SAA lounge

A **NEW** South African Airways Premium lounge has launched in Gqeberha, the city formerly known as Port Elizabeth.

The Lounge at Chief Dawid Stuurman International Airport, located on the first floor mezzanine at domestic departures, features coffee made by professionally trained baristas, a selection of fine South African wines, and a range of meals.

This renovated premium lounge follows the re-opening of the Platinum and Premium lounges at Tambo International.

Paris travel spike

CORPORATE Traveller has observed a 123% spike in business bookings to the Olympic Games, with the Flight Centre Travel Group brand anticipating growth of up to 200%.

Accor is also preparing for the influx, with reports 71% of its hotel rooms are already booked, and occupancy expected to reach 85% during the event.

"For corporates, the Games are one of the globe's best networking opportunities, as they enable thousands of businesses from all corners to come together and foster key connections and partnerships," said Corporate Traveller MD, Tom Walley.

"Our high corporate flight bookings suggest a pent-up demand among foreign audiences," he added.

MinRes Air takes off

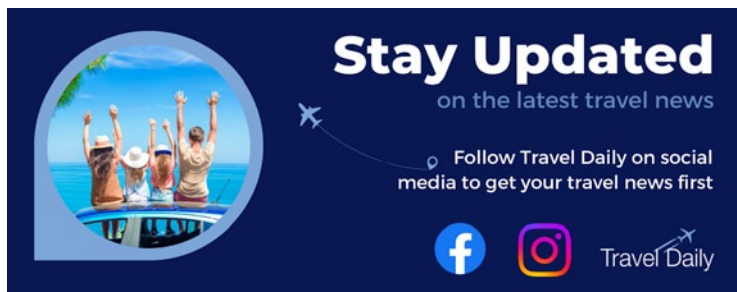
MINRES Air, Mineral Resources' internal airline, has taken off, recently touching down in the Pilbara from Brisbane.

The flight transported east coast-based MinRes employees and contractors to Wodgina, a lithium mine located 120 kilometres south of Port Hedland, completing the service in five hours and 40 minutes.

The aircraft features the new MinRes Air livery, and was refurbished to provide an extra 25cm of legroom.

MinRes Air partnered with Skytraders for initial services, an Australian-owned airline which has operated the Brisbane-Pilbara route since Jan.

Flights will take off once a week.



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In our Orbit for 30 years



CORPORATE travel specialists Orbit World Travel has reached 30 years of operation, this week reflecting on three decades' worth of achievements.

Growing to become a household name in travel since its humble beginnings as World Travel Professionals, Orbit has since expanded to become one of the largest privately owned corporate travel companies in Australasia.

Reflecting on the company's 30th birthday, Founding Partner and Director, Lisa Story, quipped that she likes to say she was 10 years' old when the journey began so as to play down her age.

"When your business turns 30, you can start to feel like you're showing your age but I wouldn't have it any other way," said Story, who is **pictured** second from right.

In 2013, Orbit joined forces with the House of Travel Group, who invested in the corporate brand after recognising its potential to expand in Australia.

Entire gets planted

ENTIRE Travel Group has planted 1,570 trees around the world on behalf of its customers, as part of its partnership with One Tree Planted.

"We plan for this partnership to flourish into the future, to ensure our contribution has a significant impact," Entire's Director, Greg McCallum, shared.

The partnership propelled the company to new heights, and in 2016 it rebranded to become Orbit World Travel, uniting Orbit Travel in New Zealand and World Travel Professionals.

The brand has evolved to become a one-stop travel provider, from luxury, corporate and group travel, to conferences and incentives and in-house travel department solutions.

"We remain committed to a world where travel is seamlessly simple and we thank you for being a part of our incredible journey - after all, we do better, together," the company stated. *AB/JM*.

TWU pays tribute

THE Transport Workers Union (TWU) is paying tribute to its former President, Ian Smith, who passed away earlier this week after a battle with cancer.

A 30-year veteran of the association, Smith is celebrated as a key figure in the TWU's fight against Qantas last year over illegally outsourcing workers and helping to get Virgin Australia's staff back to work after the airline was rescued from administration.

"For three decades, Smithy dedicated himself wholeheartedly to the pursuit of a safer, fairer, better life for transport workers, their families and all who share the roads and the skies," said TWU Secretary, Michael Kaine.

SPECIALS

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Cathay Pacific has launched its Companion Offer - "the ultimate deal" on two adult return tickets to Hong Kong from Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane or Perth. Two passengers in the same booking and travelling together in economy class will pay full price for the first eligible ticket (including base fare, taxes and applicable surcharges) and for the second eligible ticket, will only pay taxes and applicable surcharges. Sponsored by Hong Kong International Airport, the offer is only available for the first 6,500 bookings - [CLICK HERE](#) for more information.

For a limited time, **Hurtigruten Expeditions** is offering huge savings on its 2025/26 'Arctic Adventure' cruises, which start from \$4,929 per person, twin share. For example, travellers can save \$6,100 per person on the 26-day 'Northwest Passage' expedition departing 08 Aug 2025, which sails from Nome in Alaska to Nuuk in Greenland. The cruise line's fares are all-inclusive, covering meals, gratuities, drinks, daily excursions and expedition jackets. Call 1300 151 389 to take advantage of the deal, which ends 31 Aug 2024.

Travellers are being invited to escape the winter chill with a stay at the all-inclusive **Sal Salis Ningaloo Reef**, which is currently promoting its 'Stay 3, Pay 2' offer - just in time for the reef's humpback whale season. Book by 31 Aug 2024 for travel until 11 Nov 2024 [HERE](#) and apply the promo code 'WINTERS3P2' at checkout.

China Airlines has extended its winter promotion, which offers discounted airfares from Sydney to 18 destinations across Asia and London, with prices starting as low as \$1,069 for a return trip. The sale period ends 24 Jul, and applies to economy, premium economy and business class, on travel periods from 25 Jul to 30 Nov 2024. For more information, [CLICK HERE](#).

Solo travellers can enjoy single supplement offers - ranging from zero to 25% on select **AmaWaterways** departures in early 2025, as part of the cruise line's Summer Triple Savings promotion, on until 30 Sep. Also available are savings of up to 20% on a range of European itineraries in 2025 - contact 1800 867 126 to find out more about the deals.

Aussies dreaming of a winter city escape are in luck, thanks to **Adina Apartment Hotel Brisbane's** Ultimate Getaway package. Guests who book a two-night stay before 03 Sep will receive daily breakfast boxes including barista coffee for two, a bottle of wine on arrival, and a late checkout of 12pm. See adinahotels.com for more information.

Out of the Ordinary Outback is encouraging Aussies to plan a roadtrip adventure through far west NSW, by offering a 10% saving on stays at two or more of its seven properties across the state's outback. The offer, which has no booking or stay deadlines, is valid at its accommodations in Cobar, Wilcannia, White Cliffs and Broken Hill - call 1300 679 688.

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Mercure sponsors Sea Eagles



MERCURE Sydney Manly Warringah, along with its owner Salter Brothers, has become the first women's-only partner of the Sea Eagles rugby league club.

The new partnership will see the Mercure brand featured prominently on the front right of the women's playing shorts, during game day announcements, and across the team's digital content on the website and social media platforms.

Mercure will also provide accommodation to players and coaching staff when they travel for games and training, employment

opportunities for players under the game's 'no work, no play' policy, and discounts on stays for players, staff and members.

"We are extremely excited to be investing in the rapid rise of women's sport," Mercure Sydney Manly Warringah General Manager, Scott Bear, said.

"We hope this partnership can help to raise its profile, not only on the Northern Beaches, but across Australia and provide support for women's sport." *JM*

Kerala into the sky

INDIA'S Civil Aviation Ministry has issued an initial No Objection Certificate (NOC) to a new startup airline that is eyeing domestic operations from next year and international flights in 2026.

Air Kerala is a registered subsidiary of Cochin International Airport and will be an ultra-low cost carrier which will begin with three ATR 72-600 aircraft before growing its fleet to 20 to launch flights into the UAE.

The airline is being spearheaded by Afi Ahmed, a UAE-based businessman and Chairman of Zetfly Aviation.

Payouts from Cook

ADMINISTRATORS overseeing the 2019 collapse of the Thomas Cook Group have announced creditors will gain access in Sep to £280 million (A\$533 million) following the finalised liquidation of the company (*TD* 23 Sep 2019).

The process has been significantly drawn out due to 57 different Thomas Cook entities requiring dissolution and the sale of assets, including airport slots, hotel investments and retail agency shopfronts across the UK.

The Thomas Cook brand is now owned and operated by Chinese investment house Fosun Tourism Group, however may be in line to be sold to Polish travel group eSky (*TD* 18 Jan).

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