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Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today features six pages of news plus full pages from:

- Collette
- Tourism NT

Collette showcase

AGENTS from around Australia can secure their place at a series of events to preview Collette's 2025 land touring collection.

See **page seven** to register to attend an event near you.

Win a trip to the NT

REGISTRATIONS are open for a live webinar hosted by Tourism NT, where agents can become a Territory expert, submit questions to be answered, and be in with a chance to win a trip to see it for themselves - see **page eight**.

Lights out on QF jetlag

QANTAS will introduce 12 unique light scenes inspired by the colours of the Australian landscape to help travellers on its Project Sunrise ultra-long haul flights arrive awake, alert and refreshed at their destination.

When the much-vaunted Project Sunrise takes to the sky from 2026, travellers will be exposed to different light sequences at various stages of the flight.

Alongside 'Welcome' and 'Farewell' lighting scenes, Qantas will use blue-spectrum lighting to help travellers adjust to changing time zones as they travel, with crew able to soften this based on cabin mood and ambience.

The lighting scheme will also be utilised in Qantas' special Airbus A350 Wellbeing Zone (**TD 20 May 2022**), which is designed to relax travellers while the rest of the aircraft is in a dark period.

When it's time for sleep, the aircraft will transition through a simulated sunset into a moonlit night sky and slow cloud effect designed to help guests relax.

Conversely, a gradual lighting of the cabin from the front of the aircraft to the rear will rouse travellers with an authentic Australian sunrise.

Tailored scenes to suit the taxi, take-off and landing will also be implemented depending on the time of the flight.

Travellers in the six enclosed first class suites at the front of the aircraft will be able to tailor

the lighting to their personal preference and whichever time zone they choose to be in.

Qantas International CEO, Cam Wallace, said the carrier has relished the opportunity to work with experts to rethink the inflight experience for customers.

"One of the things that was clear from the research is the importance of light cycles and brightness in setting the body clock and that was the basis of this testing," Wallace said.

"Combined with the design of the cabins, specialised meal planning, and the movement program, this unique lighting sequence will help improve our customers' comfort in the air and minimise their jetlag when they arrive at their destination."

The new lighting patterns come from five years Qantas has spent working with the University of Sydney's Charles Perkins Centre (**TD 18 Oct 2019**) and Caon Design Office to study traveller behaviour and circadian rhythms on long-haul flights.

Using both real-world test flights and an A350 mock cabin at the Airbus Customer Definition Centre in Hamburg, researchers have created and tested hundreds of light patterns and sequences to reduce the impact of jetlag and improve overall guest wellness.

Dr Sveta Postnova from the Charles Perkins Centre said it was great to see circadian science being translated into practice. *ML*

Ride a luxury wave

DESPITE the cost-of-living crunch, Australians' desire for luxury travel and planning a truly personalised experience will remain insatiable for some time to come, says Expedia TAAP Vice-President, Robin Lawther.

The OTA said travel advisors are best placed to capitalise on the luxury proclivity - read Lawther's thoughts on **page four**.

Slice lay-by launch

TRAVEL agents can now offer lay-by for flights and other products with Slice Pay, which has made its debut in the market.

Agents can learn more about Slice from former Express Travel Group Regional Sales Manager Michael Kyrywn, who has joined the team at Slice - details **HERE**.

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DPS capacity boost

NGURAH Rai International Airport in Denpasar has launched 'Project Optimisation', an initiative designed to increase the airport's capacity from 24 million to 32 million visitors per year.

The initial phase of the project, due to be completed this year, will see a new departure area and security screening lanes added to both the international and domestic terminals.

From next year, five more parts of the airport will be gradually reworked to boost capacity to a level officials say should allow the airport to grow organically for the next eight years, before major infrastructure work is needed.

The capacity growth at what is currently Bali's only air gateway is then likely to shift the focus to development of North Bali Int'l Airport, a topic which has been on the table for nearly a decade (**TD** 26 May 2015).

While no timeline has been outlined for the construction of a second airport in North Bali, plans tabled so far show a facility capable of catering to 50 million travellers per year at full capacity.

The new airport, which would be built on reclaimed land off the coast of Kubutambahan, would be 100 kilometres from Kuta. *ML*

Bunnik's new brox

SMALL group specialist Bunnik Tours has launched its first brochure for 2025 focusing on the UK, Ireland and Europe.

As it begins its 30th anniversary year in 2025, the new guide represents the company's largest European program to date, with new tours, more departures and what it says is "the perfect balance" of organised sightseeing and independent exploration.

The 32-page guide details a new 12-day 'Discover Iceland' tour and two new luxury 'In-Style' tours in Morocco and Turkiye.

The brochure is now available in both print and digital formats - call 1300 125 007 to get a copy.

Cruising targeted by NZ

NEW Zealand Customs is set to slug cruise travellers with an 88% spike in its border processing levy from 01 Dec in a move which has been slammed by the New Zealand Cruise Association (NZCA) and CLIA Australasia.

According to a consultation paper, NZ's Ministry of Primary Industries and the New Zealand Customs Service will raise the levy for cruise ship arrivals from NZ\$11.48 to NZ\$21.54.

The increase far supercedes the department's own price cap, which is also set to be raised to NZ\$22.61 in a move which could drive prices higher in the future.

In a media statement, NZCA Chief Executive, Jacqui Lloyd, said the association was "deeply concerned" about the proposed increase, coming when New Zealand was already experiencing a downturn in cruise ship arrivals.

"NZ Customs set 2021-2024 Border Processing levies despite being advised that cruise numbers would return strongly upon the reopening of the maritime border," Lloyd said.

"NZ Customs now appears to be attempting to recoup losses due to an error in their projections."

The association added the levy increase could cost cruise lines an extra NZ\$2 million for the coming 2024/25 season, especially as many cabins have been sold and the fee cannot be passed on.

Bluey brings success

TOURISM and Events Queensland has published strong results from the first six weeks of its 'Queensland is Bluey's world for real life' campaign.

The popular children's character's appearances on Queensland.com has contributed to more than 300,000 industry leads, 100,000 competition entries, one 'Keepy Uppy' Guinness World Record and audiences of 62.5 million for published media stories.



"NZ Customs has indicated that if cruise numbers decline, the Customs Border Processing levy will increase," leading to more cancellations and larger losses.

The NZCA's concerns were backed up by CLIA Australasia, which called for full transparency.

"CLIA has warned that New Zealand is one of the most expensive countries in the world for cruise operations, which negatively impacts the deployment of cruise ships to the region," the association said.

Both organisations plan to lodge submissions formally expressing opposition to the move. *ML*

Calling Cruise-aders

FLIGHT Centre Travel Group is on the hunt for new cruise specialist agents to join its revitalised Cruiseabout brand.

Having already opened its first two stores in Perth and the Gold Coast, new stores are flagged to open in Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide and Brisbane.

"Our Cruiseabout advisors have an incredible opportunity to not only play a key role in the brand's progression journey from the very beginning, but work in a thriving, growing global industry and we'd love to welcome more people to the family," said Cruiseabout GM, Brad Kennedy.

CLICK HERE for more details.

Intrepid green book

INTREPID Travel has released a guidebook designed to help travel advisors to better communicate and sell sustainable travel.

The 12-page handbook features case studies and ideas to help agents "demystify" and discuss sustainability - **CLICK HERE**.

G'DAYGROUP

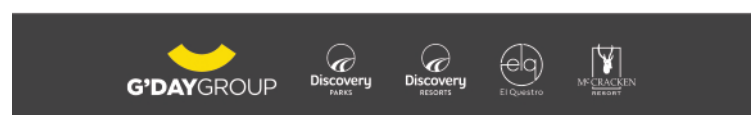
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Stuart on Lindblad

ANDREW Stuart, former President and CEO of Norwegian Cruise Line, has been appointed as an independent director on the Lindblad Expeditions Holdings Board.

Also joining the cruise line's board is Annette Reavis, who currently serves as Chief People Officer at CrossFit, LLC.

Thailand travel push

THE Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) has unveiled a new marketing plan to revitalise Thai tourism, which the goal of achieving a 7.5% increase in tourism revenue in 2025.

The 'Amazing Thailand Grand Tourism Year' plan will highlight 'Thai Charms' and 'Hidden Gem Cities', plus five must-do activities.

AITTC keen to 'Get it India'



LEISURE tourism to India is not reaching its full potential, says the Australia India Travel and Tourism Council (AITTC).

This was one of the major points raised recently at a travel industry event hosted by the Indian Consulate in conjunction with AITTC, which highlighted India's lack of visibility in the local market as a key point to action.

The event included an engaging presentation from Air India Area Manager, Bennet Stephens, on India's connectivity with Australia via direct SYD and MEL flights.

Stephens also participated in a panel discussion hosted by travel industry doyenne Lisa Maroun, which also included ATIA Chief Executive, Dean Long; Taj Hotels representative, Thushara Liyanarachchi; Adventure World Subcontinent Product Manager, Eric Finlay and 123 Travel Owner, Cheryl Ryan.

Among the recommendations canvassed was boosting industry knowledge through promotional

initiatives and greater agent training from AITTC by updating, resuming and expanding its 'Know India Better' seminars, which ran prior to the pandemic.

Highlighting India for specific markets such as weddings, MICE travellers, business conferences, cricket tours, wildlife safaris, golf and medical tourism and river cruising were also flagged as potential ways to increase India's status in the traveller mindset. *ML*

Pictured above at the AITTC event is Phillip Boniface, AITTC; Claudia Wolfe, Tikka Tours; Cheryl Ryan, 123 Travel; Bennet Stephens, Air India; Nirav Sutaria, Deputy Consul General of India, Sydney; Ichcha Dhupia, Eastbound Tours India; S Janakiraman, Consul General of India, Sydney; Sandip Hor, AITTC; Lisa Maroun, Enspired+; Eric Finley, Adventure World; Thushara Liyanarachchi, Taj Hotels and Dean Long, ATIA.



Window Seat

LUBBOCK in Texas has been voted as the most boring city in the world, in a new top 10 published by listicle website, *The World Bucket List*.

Based on a methodology of a lack of attractions, events and regular excitement, the site's ranking of the world's most dull destinations features some surprising inclusions and others you can't help but agree with.

The list even manages to ignore obvious places such as Boring in Oregon, Bland in Australia and Dull in Scotland, while even the Chilean capital of Santiago made the list.

Four places in North America made the list, with the Texas city joined by St Petersburg, Florida (#2), Mesa, Arizona (#9) and Ottawa, Canada (#10).

Birmingham and Hatfield in the UK provided the UK's presence on the list, while the European cities of Helsinki, Pisa and Bratislava also featured.

While no Australian city made the list proper, a supplementary selection of "notable mentions" featured Canberra, describing the ACT capital as exuding "political importance but falling short on the excitement front".

Other notable mentions included Frankfurt, Brussels, Doha and Bucharest.

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CVFR, CAPA join up

CVFR Travel Group has been announced as an event partner for CAPA's upcoming Airline Leader Summits in Brisbane and Hong Kong later this year.

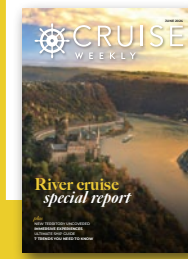
Ram Chhabra, Chief Executive of CVFR, described the partnership as "a great opportunity to showcase the value of our Airline Rep Services business".

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Agents' role in new era of lux travel

OPINION

Based in the Netherlands, Robin Lawther leads Expedia Group's Travel Agent Affiliate Programme as Vice President.



Got an opinion to share? Let us know in up to 400 words at feedback@traveldaily.com.au

IN THE years following the pandemic, people were simply grateful to travel again - now, travellers are raising the bar.

Not only is the demand for travel higher than ever before, but so are the budgets.

Travel agents are seeing a higher demand for luxury travel experiences, and research shows this will only increase with time.

When people think of luxury travel, most think of extravagance, pampering and indulgence. And while that may be true, luxury travel is far more complex than five-star hotels and white-glove service.

"Clients are looking for unique and personalised experiences," said Tara, owner of Resfeber Travel in a recent Expedia survey.

Regardless of individual preferences, there are two key aspects that make a travel experience truly luxurious - acute attention to detail, and unparalleled service.

Anna-Lisa, owner of the travel agency Just Pack, told Expedia TAAP her luxury clients expect "head-to-toe service, itinerary

customisation, and planning all logistics: accommodations, transfers, flights, activities...even down to restaurant booking".

Above all else, planning is the most important (and often least talked about) aspect of a luxury travel experience.

The kind of planning that goes into creating a luxury travel experience takes a lot of time and energy dedicated to meticulous research, not to mention a wide network of trusted resources and service providers, curated for these luxury travellers.

“
Eighty-five percent of clients view agents as the best way to book personalised, luxury travel experiences
”

That's where travel agents come in. Without the assistance and expertise of travel agents, luxury vacations would be almost impossible to plan.

In fact, a Phocuswright survey of travel agents revealed that a majority (55%) of their clients are affluent travellers seeking personalised service and expertise, typically those with a six-figure income.

The survey also found that agents have the most success

when they have a particular niche or area of focus, making luxury travel an emerging specialisation.

Travel agents not only have time to plan these vacations, as it's their full-time job, they also have the expertise and connections to ensure premium quality throughout the vacation.

Most clients agree, with 85% viewing travel agents as the best way to book personalised, luxury travel experiences.

Potentially one of the most important aspects of a travel agent's role is their unmatched level of support throughout the entire traveller's journey.

Their ability to nimbly navigate schedule changes and last-minute adjustments to plans are what most travellers value.

The relationships that travel agents build with their networks are a huge contributor to the seamless travel experience and support their customers can benefit from.

Expedia TAAP's program provides luxury travel agents with a wide selection of 4- and 5-star properties to choose from and over 600,000 luxury room types, including suites and villas, in addition to exclusive rates.

Luxury travel has exploded with possibilities, with endless options now when it comes to creating a custom travel experience.

As options continue to increase, travel agents will become even more crucial in the process of making that trip a reality.

QF regional grants

NEARLY 30 community groups in regional parts of Australia will share in \$2 million in funding and free flights as recipients in Qantas' Regional Grants program.

The philanthropic program is in its third year and will see Qantas provide combinations of cash, free flights and marketing support to 28 different organisations.

Successful applications include Story Dogs in NSW to fly volunteers to its leadership conference in Tweed Heads; Feed The Little Children in Western Australia to buy a new vehicle; and GP Lyf Hacks in SA to fund health forums in South Australia for nurses and doctors.

"Supporting the regions we serve is something we take great pride in at Qantas," said QantasLink Chief Pilot and Grants Panel Chair, Captain David Nelson.

Travelex SIN growth

RETAIL travel money brand Travelex will double its presence at Singapore's Changi Airport, having won a new five-year tender to provide FX services at the airport until 2029.

Travelex is already operating in T2 and T3, with the latter used by Singapore Airlines, and is now set to move into T1, used by Qantas and T4, where Jetstar Asia resides.

The company will more than double staff numbers from 65 to more than 130 to serve the 10 new locations set to open across arrivals, departures and transit areas throughout the airport.

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CORPORATE UPDATE

Business travel powerhouse

THREE leading travel industry organisations have joined forces to enhance the global business travel sector.

The Association of Travel Management Companies (ATMC) has expanded its alliance with the Business Travel Association (BTA) to include the Guild of European Business Travel Agents (GEBTA), which represents and promotes the interests of business travel agents across Europe.

The collaboration signifies a commitment to building stronger connections and boosting the collective capabilities of its members, with ATMC, BTA and GEBTA now ready to pave the way for a new era of collaboration and

prominence within the business travel industry.

ATMC Chair, Tass Messinis, said, “our partnership with BTA and the inclusion of GEBTA is a significant milestone”.

“This expanded alliance allows us to leverage our combined expertise and resources to benefit our members and the broader travel industry.

“We look forward to working closely with GEBTA to develop initiatives that will drive positive change in the business travel sector,” he added.

GEBTA’s GM Marcel Forns, said joining the alliance was “an exciting opportunity”.

“We are eager to collaborate with the BTA and ATMC to enhance the value we provide to our members and to advocate for higher standards and innovation in business travel.” JM

Bleisure tax warning

AUSSIE ‘bleisure’ travellers should be extra vigilant when filing their taxes this year, Flight Centre Travel Group’s flagship SME division, Corporate Traveller (CT), has warned.

With flight bookings showing Australian business travellers now spend double the global average time on business trips, averaging six nights compared to the global average of just 3.5, CT believes the Australian Taxation Office will be paying close attention to whether travellers are claiming the right expenses.


The FCTG brand suggests that those who are blending work and leisure travel should keep a record of their expenses.

CWT optimises

GLOBAL business travel and meetings solutions provider, CWT, is rolling out a new platform for its airfare optimisation service to help customers secure lower airfares.

Powered by Wenrix, the upgraded version uses enhanced AI and machine learning models, and extends the window during which prices can be optimised.



The solution has been integrated into all of CWT’s booking channels, and is being rolled out to all customers in countries around the world.



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CT’s Harrington honoured



CORPORATE Traveller’s Claire Harrington was recognised for her ‘Outstanding Achievement’ as the brand’s Global SVP Marketing at Flight Centre Travel Group’s (FCTG) Global Gathering in Lisbon last week.

The London-based travel expert, who first joined FCTG as Head of Corporate Marketing - Europe in 2019, said she was “hugely grateful” to receive the award.

“I feel very lucky to have a great team and work with some very talented colleagues around the world on amazing projects to support both our brand and individual growth,” Harrington shared on LinkedIn.

“This award is a result of being fortunate to work with these people and them seeing the value that the marketing function brings to multiple areas in our

organisation, and allowing me to test and learn more as I go!”

Harrington also thanked Corporate Traveller’s Global Managing Director, Tom Walley, and FCTG’s Global Chief Marketing Officer, Frits De Kok, for their “endless support”. JM

Pictured: Harrington gets all clucky over her trophy at FCTG’s Global Gala Awards Dinner.

Conferma expands

CONFERMA has partnered with ground transportation automation and management platform, GroundSpan, to enable corporate travellers to easily pay for ground transportation with virtual cards.

The move sees Conferma-powered virtual cards expand beyond hotel and air payments.



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Hilton Honors has extended its 'Dine Like a Member' promotion to 31 Dec with benefits including 10% off the bill for Hilton Honors Base and Silver members; and 25% off for Honors Gold and Diamond members. The deal is available at over 900 Hilton managed restaurants and bars throughout the Asia Pacific region including popular Osteria Mozza at Hilton Singapore Orchard. For more information, [CLICK HERE](#).

Australians can explore Italy's picturesque Ligurian Hills on foot, sampling local wines and cuisine along the way, on a self-guided, in-to-inn hike offered by **On Foot Holidays**. The route rated medium-to-hard in difficulty can be walked from May through to Oct. The seven-night walk costs approximately A\$2,318 and includes seven nights' accommodation, and several meals meaning walkers simply carry a day pack. To explore further, [CLICK HERE](#).

Discover the charm and mystery of hidden regional provinces of France with self-drive canal boating with **Entire Travel Group**. Clients can enjoy 25% and the company's 'Lowest Price Guarantee' on a unique and personalised holiday away from tourist crowds, exploring hidden gems along France's Burgandy, Alsace-Lorraine, and Du-Midi regions. To find out more, contact Entire Travel Group - [CLICK HERE](#).

Don't stress where to drop off your car before your trip. Reserve parking ahead at **Brisbane Airport's** Domestic Terminal, and not only will you get the closest parking spaces to the Terminal, but you will receive 10% off your booking if you book ParkLong or ParkPremium. [CLICK HERE](#) to book your space via this online form.

Head to the charming capital of Tasmania and book a two-night stay at **Vibe Hobart**, and receive a complimentary upgrade to a Mountain View room (priced from \$410), breakfast for two, a late 12pm check out, plus a \$50 credit to spend at Belvedere restaurant. On sale until 03 Sep and valid for check-in up to 18 months in advance. [CLICK HERE](#) for booking details.

Make an escape to the nation's capital with a stay at **Hotel Kurrajong**. Stay two nights in a classic room for \$329, receive a \$50 food and beverage credit, two daily house drinks at the art-deco Chifley's Bar and Grill and daily breakfast for two, plus a leisurely midday check out. Bookings can be made until 03 Sep with valid stay dates up to 18 months in advance - [CLICK HERE](#) for more details.

Time for an unforgettable luxury escape with Sofitel Sydney Darling Harbour thanks to its Winter Indulgence package. Enjoy a luxurious stay with a delicious breakfast included and \$100 credit at the Champagne Bar (once per booking), plus a late check-out until 1pm. Guests can add dinner at the two-hatted, French inspired Atelier restaurant, sip on a cocktail at the sky high Lumiere on Thirty Five, and enjoy an indulgent SPA treatment. Call 02 8388 8888 or book online - [CLICK HERE](#).

Sheraton sights set on PNG



MARRIOTT International has signed an agreement to debut its Sheraton Hotels & Resorts brand in Papua New Guinea, in an accord with Dynasty Development Limited.

The Stanley Hotel & Suites will be converted into The Sheraton Port Moresby Stanley Hotel & Suites (render **pictured**), featuring 378 rooms and suites.

The hotel will reopen in Aug 2025 following the initial stage of a comprehensive refurbishment program, offering 268 premium rooms and 15 suites.

Sheraton Port Moresby will also feature 95 apartments, which will include a separate lounge, kitchen, and dining areas.

Amenities will include two restaurants, a bar, cafe, infinity pool, pool bar, fitness centre,

day spa, and the largest modern conference facilities in Papua New Guinea.

The hotel is centrally located in Port Moresby's business and cultural hub, connected to Vision City Mega Mall, and is just a five-minute drive from Port Moresby International Airport.

Sheraton Port Moresby will join Marriott Executive Apartments Port Moresby as Marriott International's second property in Papua New Guinea, and the 11th Sheraton hotel in the Australia Pacific region.

"Introducing the Sheraton brand to Port Moresby represents a significant milestone for us in the Papua New Guinea market," Dynasty Development Director James Sze Yuan Lau said.

"The current hotel, with its storied legacy and commitment to excellence, perfectly embodies the essence of Sheraton's renowned hospitality.

"We are excited to collaborate with Marriott International to elevate this property and deliver unparalleled experiences to our guests," he added. *MS*

Trump Tower Dubai

DUBAI real estate developer Dar Global has partnered with The Trump Organisation to bring a Trump hotel and residences to the UAE, with the location and design unveiled later this year.

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