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Today's issue of TD is coming to you courtesy of Air Canada.

WITH the craziness of IPW done for another year, TD is heading back to Sydney on Air Canada via Vancouver.

It paid off on the way here, allowing us to skip the significant lines at LAX customs and immigration by getting it all done at YVR, a process that took literally four minutes.

Today we'll be trying out the Maple Leaf lounge in both LAX as well as YVR before taking AC33 back to Sydney.

It's a Green Revolution

URGENT action is required by the Federal Government in next week's budget to properly incentivise companies to develop local 'green fuel' to safeguard the future of travel and tourism.

The claim was made today by Tourism & Transport Forum (TTF) CEO, Margy Osmond, who said she was hopeful of "significant support" in next week's budget.

"We must develop a local sustainable aviation fuel (SAF) or 'green fuel' industry to protect the future of Australia's tourism and aviation sectors and achieve net zero emissions by 2050," Osmond argued.

"As a long-haul destination, Australia cannot afford to be left behind other destinations like the USA, Canada, Europe, Singapore, Japan and others who are already leading the way in policies to support SAF and direct investment," she added.

Osmond has been vocal about her support of more aggressively cultivating local production of SAF, sounding the warning in Canberra in Feb (**TD** 08 Feb) that unless Australia gets serious about green fuel, tourists will make alternative travel plans to nations that invest in it.

In the pursuit of more dialogue about the issue, the TTF is hosting its 2024 Green Revolution Summit on 16 May at ICC Sydney.

The event will discuss how to make major events more sustainable, expanding the use of electric vehicles, sustainability at airports, and giving consumers more sustainable travel options.

Speakers will include Qantas Chief Sustainability Officer, Andrew Parker; VA Head of Fuel & Aviation Decarbonisation, Daniel Dott; and Booking.com Oceania Manager, Todd Lacey.

For more details, see **HERE**. AB

Abu Dhabi stopover

ETIHAD Airways has introduced Abu Dhabi Stopover, a new program offering its customers the option of booking a free hotel stay as part of the flight booking.

Guests can choose a free stay for one or two nights in a range of premier properties, and packages are only available on [etihad.com](https://www.etihad.com).

Shangri La Al Beri, Aloft Abu Dhabi, and Bab Al Qasr are among the hotels included in the push.

Spots are limited

TIME is running out to register for the Global Sustainable Tourism Summit, which takes place next month in Brisbane.

See the **back page** for more details on the Ecotourism event.

Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today features five pages of news including **Business Events News**, a cover wrap from **Journey Beyond**, plus a full page from **Ecotourism Australia**.



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APT's Best Asia sale

APT is currently offering savings of up to \$8,000 per couple on its 'Best of Vietnam & Cambodia' adventure as part of its new Best of Asia sale.

For bookings taken between now and 31 May, agents can access the promotion, which extends to select itineraries in 2024 and 2025 in popular markets such as Vietnam, Cambodia, Japan, South Korea, Sri Lanka and India.

Among the discounted highlights is an opportunity to save up to \$5,000 per couple on APT's 'Spiritual Cambodia and the Mekong land and river cruise'.

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G'day's Murray buy

G'DAY Group has acquired the Moama Waters Holiday Park for an undisclosed sum.

Situated between Echuca-Moama and Barmah in the Murray River region in NSW, the 20-hectare property features 26 villas, 71 powered sites, two resort swimming pools, a waterpark, as well as an on-site restaurant and private boat ramp.

The park sustained minor damage during flooding in late 2022, with G'day Group flagging a further investment of \$1.3 million to enhance flood resilience.

"The property holds promising scope for further development, as existing sites are well distributed throughout the park, presenting infill opportunities to create more facilities for visitors," G'day Group said after making the purchase.

ATAS enjoys record surge

THE Australian Travel Industry Association (ATIA) has reported an "unprecedented surge" in renewals for its Australian Travel Accreditation Scheme (ATAS).

The encouraging membership figures were released following a meeting of the ATAS Advisory Committee (AAC), which

discussed key topics around the success of the program and how to make it even more valuable moving forward.

"The significant increase in accreditation renewals ahead of previous years signals the industry's growing recognition of ATAS as the benchmark for excellence in travel services," AAC Chair, David Walker, said.

"Our latest AAC meeting reinforced our shared commitment to propelling the industry forward, ensuring ATAS

remains the gold standard for travel accreditation."

Walker also revealed the AAC engaged on topics such as the recent move to address non-economic loss following a High Court decision (TD 01 May), the effectiveness of participant compliance, as well

as the proficient management of consumer complaints.

Reflecting on the strongest renewal success to date for ATAS, ATIA

CEO, Dean Long, said the result underscored the travel industry's strong belief in the value and integrity of the program.

"ATIA appreciates the ongoing dedication of our AAC members, whose insights...advance ATAS at an operational level and build its reputation as the hallmark of trusted travel businesses." AB



Seabourn incentive

SEABOURN has kicked off its inaugural South Pacific and Kimberley Expedition season with a new travel agent incentive, providing advisors the chance to score a \$500 pre-paid Mastercard gift card.

To be in the running to win, travel sellers must book and deposit any of the cruise line's 2024 South Pacific and Kimberley *Seabourn Pursuit* (pictured) departures by 20 May.

The promotion will run until voyages are sold out, or May 20, whichever comes first.



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Window Seat

SAMUEL L. Jackson's film *Snakes on a Plane* almost played out in real life when a man attempted to sneak a bag of snakes onto a flight at Miami Int'l Airport last month.

The man was caught hiding a stash of baby snakes in his pants when he was stopped at checkpoint, the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) revealed on social media platform X.

As a result of the slippery incident, the traveller's flight ticket was cancelled, and his slithery friends were confiscated and handed over to the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission.

It is not known if the snakes were the man's pets, but social media users speculated that he might breed exotic snakes, and was attempting to deliver them to their buyer.

While the TSA didn't reveal the breed of the snakes, several X users suggested they were juvenile Palmetto corn snakes, which are quite rare and are becoming increasingly popular within captive snake collections.

This isn't the first time a traveller has been caught bringing snakes onto a plane, with one woman managing to sneak 22 snakes and a chameleon on board a flight at Chennai Airport last year.



Fiji rapid adventure rise

FIJI has long been associated with resorts and relaxation, but now more tourists are visiting the country in search of adventure, according to Tourism Fiji Chief Executive Officer Brent Hill.

The global adventure travel market is estimated to reach \$US1 trillion by 2030 and Hill told **TD** there has been a rise in adventure travellers to Fiji over the past year, especially for ziplining, river tubing, whitewater rafting and hiking.

Speaking at this week's Fiji Tourism Exchange (FTE), Hill described the adventure market in Fiji as being "under-sold and under-appreciated" by the broader travel industry.

"I would say to the agents that 100%, we've got amazing beaches, islands, coconut palms... but don't think of Fiji as just a 'fly-and-flop' destination.

"Places like the Maldives...it's a pretty rinse-and-repeat kind of destination, as beautiful as it is, but we're not that - there's real depth [here]," Hill added.

Fiji Tourism is now encouraging agents to send their clients outside of resorts and on activities that combine both culture with adventure, like the Sigatoka River Cruise or Eco Trax on the Coral Coast.

Later this year, the international tourism industry will have a chance to understand more about what Fiji has to offer adventure travellers, for the first time hosting the three-day AdventureNext travel conference.

Delivered by the global Adventure Travel Association, it will take place from 20-22 Nov in Nadi.

Local tour operators can also tap into the growing interest in adventure and authentic cultural experiences, like iBike, which will launch later this year.

iBike co-founder, Ren Slatter, told media during FTE, "iBike was founded with a passion for experiencing the beauty of Fiji



without boundaries - on electric bicycles, you can feel the thrills of an off-road ride while still being exposed to all of the elements and flavours of Fiji beyond the confines of a vehicle".

"The rolling hills, sugarcane fields, rocky streams and quaint villages around our beautiful islands are the best way to see the interior of Fiji."

The team at Go Dirty Tours Fiji is also offering travellers a chance to experience Fijian culture combined with adventure.

According to the company's Marketing and Communications Director, Liz Scott, Go Dirty Tours Fiji has experienced an interesting comeback after COVID, with new markets attracted to its activities "Perhaps COVID gave people the opportunity to reflect on what they value when they travel", Scott noted.

"We used to have a younger market, then it really changed and now we have a lot more families, and five years ago we wouldn't have seen much contact from the Japanese and Chinese markets, but of late, that's increased a lot," she added.

Traditionally, most of Go Dirty's customers look for ocean-based adventures, but lately, land-based activities like quad biking and ziplining are experiencing a surge in popularity.

This is particularly the case for those tourists who are returning to Fiji and wish to discover a different side of the islands. *JHM*

UK border delays

LENGTHY queues and chaotic scenes were witnessed at airports across the United Kingdom earlier this week after border control systems crashed due to a technical issue.

E-gate systems were restored to normal working functionality yesterday, but not before travellers were stalled for hours as border officials were forced to manually process passports.

A spokesperson for the Home Office said that "at no point was border security compromised, and there is no indication of malicious cyber activity".

The technical issues experienced on Tue and early Wed are not the first time the UK's automated e-gates have stopped working, with multiple airports affected by an IT issue in May 2023.

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EVENTS A WINNER IN VICTORIAN BUDGET

THE events industry has come out on top in the Victorian State Budget for FY24-25, released yesterday, despite a huge funding cut to the state's tourism marketing body (**TD** yesterday).

While Visit Victoria saw its cash pool shrink dramatically from \$32.5 million annually down to just \$8.1 million, all sectors of the events industry received a notable boost.

The new budget dedicated \$85 million to the Major Events Fund, up from \$62 million in previous allocations, while the Business Events Fund also received a healthy top-up of \$3.2 million, bringing available funds to \$9.6 million for 2024-25.

The Victorian Government has also allocated \$1.72 million to the Nyaal Banyul Geelong Convention and Events Centre ahead of its opening in 2026 (**TD** 08 Feb).



Additionally, the Victorian Festivals Package is set to receive \$6.5 million over four years.

While Victoria Tourism Industry Council (VTIC) CEO Felicia Mariani (**pictured**) lamented the Visit Victoria budget cut, which she said was "incredibly hard to come to terms with", she expressed delight at the strong allocation for

the state's events.

"Pleasingly, this festivals package will finally see smaller events and festivals across Greater Melbourne eligible to participate in this fund."

It is welcome timing for the events sector in Victoria, which is still reeling from the state's disastrous handling of

its Commonwealth Games bid, which it pulled out of hosting in 2026 due to issues with its budget and planning process.

The decision made by the then-Premier, Daniel Andrews, cost Victoria an eye-watering \$380 million penalty (**TD** 01 May).

A number of stakeholders are concerned that Victoria's reputation as a reliable host of major events has been damaged as a result of the aborted effort, with multiple views put forward in the recent Select Committee on the 2026 Commonwealth Games Bid Inquiry.

Athletics Australia claimed the cancellation has harmed Victoria's ability to attract elite athletes to compete at major events, while Visit Victoria pushed back on any suggestions brand damage had been done to the events sector. *JM/AB*

GCCEC's eco-map

THE Gold Coast Convention and Exhibition Centre (GCCEC) has launched its five-year sustainability strategy, which aligns with the UN's Sustainable Development Goals.

The 2024-2028 roadmap outlines what the venue has achieved so far and the initiatives it intends to implement over the coming years, as it strives to foster an eco-conscious events industry.

Major events to play a key role in Brand USA's tourism push

MAJOR events including the 2026 FIFA World Cup and the 2028 Summer Olympic Games have been highlighted by Brand USA as key to its tourism growth goals in the coming years.

The importance of a variety of events to the US tourism push was emphasised at IPW in Los Angeles this week.

Big events taking place in the US over the next four years include World Pride in Washington, DC, the 100th

Anniversary of Route 66, the FIFA World Cup, and the 2028 Summer Olympics in LA.

"We're excited to showcase the US in the next few years by capitalising on these major events," Brand USA's CEO Christopher Thompson said.

He noted that any one of the events listed above would be a big deal, let alone all of them over the next few years.

Coming up sooner is a push by LA on an arts and culture front,

with "virtually every museum, gallery and scientific institution throughout Southern California" getting in on the action, according to Getty Foundation Director Joan Weinstein.

"There will be more than 60 exhibitions throughout southern California, and we will be joined by lots of music and performing arts," she exclaimed.

The US is set to welcome 90 million visitors who will spend \$279b annually by 2027. *DF*



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Llewellyn Wyeth has taken on the role of Area Manager South Australia at **Accor**. Wyeth makes his return to the accommodation operator, where he worked for almost a decade across a range of roles before his departure in 2013. He is also the General Manager at Pullman Adelaide, and in years prior, held the same role at Pullman Albert Park and Novotel Melbourne St Kilda.

Tourism Australia has announced **Andrew Boxall** as the Regional General Manager for the UK and northern Europe, and Managing Director for Germany. He is currently the Executive GM at FCTG and has been in the tourism space for more than 25 years. Boxall's appointment takes effect on 15 Jul, and follows the departure of Sally Cope.

Langham Hospitality Group has announced the appointment of **Jay Nikolin** as its new Cluster Director of Marketing and Communications, where he will lead the marketing operations at two of its prominent properties. Bringing a wealth of expertise from Accor and Sofitel, Nikolin will oversee The Langham, Melbourne, and The Langham, Sydney in his new role.

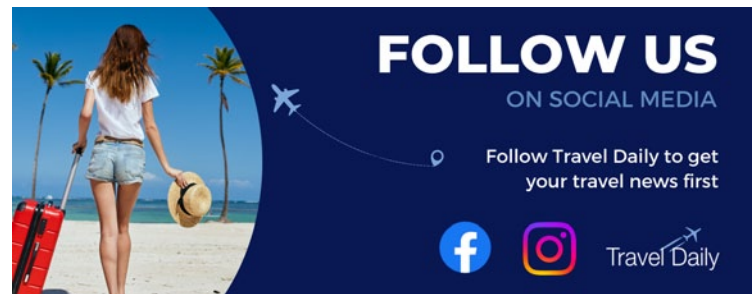
On 15 Sep, **Till Streichert** will join **Deutsche Lufthansa AG's** Executive Board and also assume the position of Chief Financial Officer. He has been appointed for a three-year term, which will see him on duty until 14 Sep 2027. Streichert is currently the CFO of Amadeus, based in its office in Madrid, Spain.

Bringing over three decades of experience, **Ivy Kwan** has taken on a new role at **Capella Hotel Group**. As a Senior Vice President of Sales and Marketing, Kwan will leverage her profound understanding of luxury hospitality, commercial insights, and guest engagement to advance the hotelier's strategic positioning.

Based in Singapore, **Oliver Chavy** has been named the new Chief Executive Officer at **The Lux Collective**. He will spearhead the overall strategic direction of the organisation, while overseeing its expansion in high potential markets. Chavy takes over the top job from Paul Jones, who departs after 14 years.

Angie Stephen is taking the next step in her career at **Royal Caribbean Group**, becoming the company's new Vice President for International Business. Previously the VP for Asia Pacific, she will now be responsible for positioning the line as a global holiday brand of choice across more than 80 countries. Stephen's appointment follows Bert Hernandez's repositioning to Silversea.

Norwegian Cruise Line has promoted Damian Borg to Director Sales, Strategy and Operations APAC. He was most recently the National Account Manager for the cruise line from Nov 2017, and prior to that, was the Head of Sales and Customer Service Manager ANZ at Club Med.



MH woos agents over dinner



MALAYSIA Airlines recently teamed up with the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) to host a trade dinner in Perth.

More than 50 WA-based travel agents were in attendance, and had the opportunity to connect with TAT's Director, Busakorn Prommanot, and Marketing Director, Sherly Handjojo.

Also there on the night were Malaysia Airlines' Regional Manager ANZ, Giles Gilbert; Sales Manager ANZ Tim Shepherd; Marketing Manager ANZ Melinda Voon; and Account Manager WA, Dilan Selvadurai.

The event was part of a wider joint consumer campaign in Mar, which promoted Bangkok and Phuket to Aussie travellers.

The night ended on a high for one lucky agent, who took home the grand prize of two return flights to Chiang Mai with Malaysia Airlines.

The trade dinner follows the airline's announcement of five

weekly flights between Perth and Chiang Mai, which are set to come into effect from 15 Aug.

The carrier currently operates 53 flights per week to Bangkok and Phuket from Australia and New Zealand. *JM*

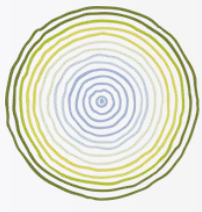
Mum free at Merlin

MERLIN Entertainments attractions, including Sea Life Aquariums and Wild Life Sydney Zoo, are offering free entry for mums from 12 May - 16 May in celebration of Mothers Day.

Valid on general admission tickets for one attraction only, the offer can also be applied to visits to the Sydney Eye Tower, Legoland Discovery Centre Melbourne, and Madame Tussauds Sydney.

Mums can also get in for free at the Fly Treetop Adventures in Illawarra and Otway, or the Immersive Gamebox in Sydney.

Visitors are advised to book in advance online.



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