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Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today features eight pages of the latest travel industry news including a photo page from **A&K**, plus full pages from:

- Crystal
- ATIA Accreditation

TEQ boss to step down

TOURISM and Events Queensland (TEQ) CEO Patricia O'Callaghan (pictured) has announced she will be departing the body to take up a role within the new Qld Liberal govt led by David Crisafulli.



O'Callaghan has been in the role less than two years, moving across from Gold Coast Tourism Corporation in Jan last year to replace long-standing CEO Leanne Coddington (*TD* 16 Dec 2022).

She departs to take up an acting Director General of Environment, Tourism, Science and Innovation position, stating she is excited about progressing the state's tourism agenda, albeit in a different capacity.

"Andrew Powell has been sworn in as Minister for the Environment and Tourism to lead the new 20-year tourism plan, with a strong focus on maximising potential ecotourism opportunities," O'Callaghan said.

"I am incredibly grateful for the support I have been given from our industry," she added.

"We have made significant inroads with the launch and progress of the TEQ Blueprint, and I leave knowing the sector is in exceptionally good hands."

No replacement CEO for TEQ has been revealed. *AB*

One brand standard

ACCREDITED travel industry businesses are now known as 'ATIA Accredited' following the retirement of the ATAS brand.

The streamlined approach is aimed at making accreditation simpler and improves recognition - find out more on **page nine**.

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Next gen agent training

TRAVELLERS Choice has announced free training for the next generation of travel advisors (**TD** breaking news).

Announced at the Travellers Choice Conference on Saturday morning, the three-month program will focus on building on-the-job skills and cover topics like industry fundamentals, products and destinations, sales techniques and management.

It is a critical time to nurture new agents, especially off the back of COVID.

"Our members today have 20% fewer staff than in 2019 and the challenge for all businesses has been finding new people," said MD Christian Hunter.

"Everybody is looking for experienced staff that simply don't exist in the numbers needed," he added.

According to Hunter, ProStart will give new advisors an opportunity to hit the ground

running and start adding value to the business relatively quickly, while also taking away the burden of training from the agency owner or manager who is often "flat out dealing with customers".

"The best learning environment is on the job, so to be based in the store while doing this training along side is really powerful," he told **Travel Daily** in an interview.

Fully funded by Travellers Choice for its members, the program was developed in conjunction with Cornerstone Learning & Development.

A 'buddy' system will also ensure that participants will be given additional support and motivation along the way.

"ProStart will provide vital support to our members by helping them bring new talent into their businesses, while ensuring new starters feel supported and want to remain in the travel industry," said Hunter. **JHM**

Kramer touches down

FLIGHT Centre Travel Group's corporate consulting division FCM has appointed Jason Kramer as its new global Air Category Lead.

Based in Virginia in the United States, Kramer is responsible for directing the brand's air category management and resourcing, as well as broadening its product portfolio, including its proprietary Air Contracting IQ tool.

The experienced SaaS and aviation executive arrives at FCM after spending just over two years as Vice President of corporate travel auditing company, Tripbam.

Reflecting on his new role, Kramer said aviation is currently "undergoing a revolution", adding that it is no longer simply about achieving savings on fares via GDS and performing to targets.

"The landscape of value can be defined in endless ways," he said.

Kramer also sources and manages air programs on the Global Business Travel Association's Aviation Committee.

Travel Daily
ON LOCATION

HOBART

Today's issue of **TD** is coming to you courtesy of **Celebrity Cruises**, which is hosting us aboard **Celebrity Edge**.

TODAY marks our second day aboard **Celebrity Cruises' Celebrity Edge**, currently docked in Hobart.

The lucky contingent to join **Celebrity** for the four-day round trip from Sydney has been living it up, exploring some of the best **Edge** has to offer, including **The Retreat**, the **SEA Thermal Suite**, and the famous **Silent Disco**.

Tonight, guests will be in for another special experience, with dinner at **Edge's Fine Cut Steakhouse**, followed by **Feel the Funk**, one of the ship's premier shows.

Stockholm, Sweden

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Double hotel buy

BELMOND has divested two luxury La Residence hotels in Indochina, with KS Hotels and HMD Asia combining to purchase the properties for an as-yet-undisclosed amount.

La Residence Phou Vao in Laos is located within the UNESCO Heritage region of Luang Prabang, and will operate as normal under new managers, HMD Asia.

The same property managers are now operating La Residence D'Angkor in Cambodia, which is closed for renovation and will be reopened in Q4 next year.

La Residence D'Angkor is situated close by to Angkor Wat.

TC members celebrated



TRAVELLERS Choice celebrated its best-performing members over the weekend during its annual Choice Awards ceremony.

Accolades included the Leading Agency Award, which was won by South Australia's Travel and Cruise Professionals (**pictured**), as well as its annual Service Awards, which were presented to members who offered 10 years of continuous membership, then every five years thereafter.

Capricorn Travel was awarded for 40 years and Hastwell Travel & Cruise was recognised for its 30 years.

Gold Choice Award winners included Endeavour Travel & Cruise; Everywhere Travel; Home and Afar Travel; Jamison Travel; Oliver Travel; Panorama Cruise & Travel; Select World Travel; Top Deck Travel; Travel Makers; and Windsong Travel. *JHM*

Fly free in Outback

JOURNEY Beyond's Outback Spirit brand is offering travellers free flights when bookings are made by 20 Dec for tours taking place in 2025.

In addition to complimentary flights, the offer is combinable with other bonuses - see [HERE](#).

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Media Buying & Planning Australia

The Samoa Tourism Authority is requesting proposals from reputable media planning, buying and placement agencies for the period:
January 2025 - December 2026

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TMCs eye Aussie growth



GROWING business targets in incentive travel from Australia have led DMC representation company Tourism Portfolio to schedule a Sydney gathering on 13 Feb 2026 at the Park Hyatt.

The gathering will take place after the Asia-Pacific Incentives and Meetings Event (AIME) in Melbourne, which coincides with many DMCs' major annual marketing activity each year.

According to 2,800 responses in the Incentive Research Foundation and Society for Incentive Travel Excellence Incentive Travel Index 2024, 45% are expecting incentive travel activity to be higher than 2024.

"We have more of our international clients travelling to Australia next year than we've ever had before and that

is because they recognise that international corporate meetings and incentive travel rewards are extremely strong and getting stronger," said Tourism Portfolio GM Sharon Levingston.

"They will be exhibiting at AIME in Melbourne and then extending their stay in Sydney to exhibit at Destination Marketplace to meet with agencies and meeting and incentive planners who can't attend AIME or did so and only had limited time to catch up." ML

Levingston and Director/Owner Donna Kessler are pictured.

Tru upgrade in Filo

YOUTH-ORIENTED tour operator TruTravels has introduced an optional extension to its 16-day flagship 'Philippines Island Hopper' itinerary.

Travellers eager to continue the adventure can now select the eight-day 'Philippines Siargao Adventure' extension, which takes guests to the islands of Bohol and Siargao and takes the trip duration to 24 days.

Starting in Cebu, highlights of the extension include a visit to the Chocolate Hills and learning to surf on Siargao's beaches.

The 'Philippines Island Hopper' tour has proven to be one of the company's most sought-after adventures, with the company saying the additions make the itinerary "the ultimate trip across the Philippines".

SPAIN WITH ENTIRE TRAVEL GROUP - DAY 9-10



FOR the last full day of Entire Group Journeys' famil through southern Spain, agents met up with local guide Martha, who took them on a scenic tour of Barcelona.

They strolled past Gaudi's masterpieces – Casa Batllo, Casa Milà, and, of course, the legendary La Sagrada Familia – before ascending to the top of Montjuic, birthplace of the city, which offers epic views over the whole city. It was the ideal spot to pause, snap a few photos, and soak in their last bit of Barcelona charm.

The afternoon was theirs to wander, explore, and discover hidden corners of Barcelona before their driver, Juan, whisked them off to restaurant Secret Tapas, for a farewell meal full of local flavours. The night was filled with laughter and shared stories as they celebrated their final evening together.



Day 10 began with a relaxed breakfast before everyone headed to the airport. They departed with fresh insights, valuable experiences, and a renewed passion for sharing the magic of Spain with future travellers – an inspiring close to an unforgettable famil journey.

TOP: Abby, Carlos (Tour director), Kate, Jo, Tara, Kate, Molly, Santo, Laurin, Tim, Robin



Famil in Focus is our feature showcasing some of the photos from recent industry famils. If you want your famil to be featured, email advertising@traveldaily.com.au.



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Window Seat

TRAVELLERS Choice CEO Christian Hunter has been known to bring out his guitar and sing a tune each year to kick off the business' annual conference, and 2024 was no different.

On Sat morning, Hunter dedicated this year's song to Dr Jill Robinson, founder of Animals Asia.

Hunter had re-worked the lyrics to Simon & Garfunkel's iconic tune, *Mrs Robinson*, to reflect the work that the organisation is doing to combat bear bile farming.

It was the perfect coda to Robinson's presentation, which was both confronting and powerful.

There was not a dry eye in the house and after she shared her story, the audience stood up to applaud her.

Hunter sang: "*The bears were all imprisoned, stuck with needles for their bile/You couldn't stand to see them suffer/Trapped in tiny cages, terror in their eyes/You're gonna give them a new life/So here's to you, Jill Robinson/The world admires everything you do, ooh, ooh, ooh*".

Robinson herself was visibly moved during the performance, while the audience sang and clapped.

Hunter's traditional performance began a few years ago, when the Travellers Choice Chair was departing from the Board and Hunter was inspired to re-write the words to a Paul Kelly song and play his guitar and perform for her at the gala dinner.

"It's a bit of fun, and it's something I enjoy doing; I'm not particularly good at it, but if nothing, it shows a bit of vulnerability," Hunter told *Travel Daily* in an interview.

HA retro flare marks 95 years



HAWAIIAN Airlines has marked 95 years of operation by teaming up with accessories brand Aloha Collection to add a splash of retro colour for pax.

Available now at select locations including Ala Moana Center, DFS Waikiki, and online, HA's anniversary collection features 11 stylish pieces, including the vintage pualani (flower) print, a clip-on pouch for keeping small essentials close by.

The carrier has also introduced the small pouch in puakolu and vintage Hawaiian prints to keep belongings safe from spills and splashes at the beach or pool, as well as a light nylon hip pack.

Tassie Spirit dented

THE situation is going from bad to worse for the troubled new batch of Spirit of Tasmania ferries, with the fifth ship in the fleet damaged in high winds at its shipyard in Finland.

Spirit of Tasmania V broke free from its berth during a recent storm, forcing the vessel against the quay side opposite.

Thankfully, there is no major damage to report, with TT-Line acting CEO Kym Sayers stating a tug and two barges between the vessel prevented serious damage.

"A detailed assessment is not possible at this stage, but there has been no breach to the hull."

HA said the standout item is the exclusive flight bag in a vintage Hawaiian print, adding a nostalgic touch to the collection.

Items are priced between \$30-110 to suit all budgets.

"This colourful collaboration lets our guests celebrate our anniversary while showcasing their love for our brand," Senior Director of Brand and Community, Alisa Onishi, said.

Dick's resort is back

RICHARD Branson's Moroccan Retreat in the Atlas Mountains has formally reopened after undergoing repairs following a devastating earthquake.

Kasbah Tamadot is part of the exclusive collection of luxury properties from Virgin Limited Edition, and offers guests a brand-new second restaurant called Asayss, as well as six new riads.

The new additions join a host of luxurious wellness facilities, diverse accommodation options from conventional rooms to unique Berber tents, as well as a range of cooking lessons with local Moroccan chefs.



Kelsian inks NT deal

KELSIAN has been awarded a five-year extension to operate ferry services that take passengers from Darwin to the Tiwi Islands and Mandorah.

Subsidiary SeaLink Northern Territory inked the new deal with the NT Government on Fri, and has been operating the ferry services since 2013.

Two SeaLink vessels currently operate the routes, employing around 30 people.

"SeaLink NT has been successfully operating the ferry services in the Top End for over 10 years and we look forward to continuing to work closely with the NT Government to safely and reliably deliver these essential services to visitors to the region," CEO Donna Gauci said.

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A&K Travel Group's Greatest Adventure Yet

IT HAS been a record-breaking annual showcase for the AKTG team this year, with over 750 advisors attending six events across the country in Melbourne, Adelaide, Perth, Sydney, Brisbane and the Gold Coast. Entitled 'Our Greatest Adventure Yet', the showcases shared the exciting expansion plans for the Group, as well as updates from A&K experts on the ground in Africa, Europe and LATAM.

Crystal and Sanctuary Retreats shared valuable product updates and insights.

Twenty lucky advisors across the events won amazing prizes and will experience A&K, Sanctuary and Crystal firsthand.



AKTG Team at Arts Centre Melbourne.



THE Globetrotter team super engaged at the Perth showcase.



JOHN Round-Turner, A&K Africa; Vanitha, Out&About Africa prize winner; and Alexa Papoulias, A&K.



TINA Kordys, Travel Associates, who won the Africa prize with John Round-Turner, A&K Africa; Fiona Cogar, Sanctuary Retreats; and Alison Banks, A&K.



AKTG cupcakes - yum!



CROWD participation with Latin dancers who knew how to get the party started at the QT Gold Coast.



LATIN dancers getting party started in Melbourne.

TARA Wheeler, Bespoke Journeys; Julie Drakes, Gathering Getaways; Jacqui Tufala, Crystal; and Jacki Egan, Gathering Getaways.



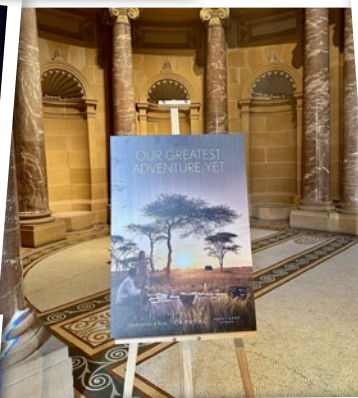
AKTG team and trade partners at QT Gold Coast.



ANDREW Gallagher, A&K Europe with Michael Lewis, Lewis & Turner Travel Associates, who won the Paris prize.



LOUISE Crane from Travelcall, who will be one of the first trade partners to experience Pure Amazon & Dalia Gibu, A&K Americas.



AKTG at the National Gallery of NSW.



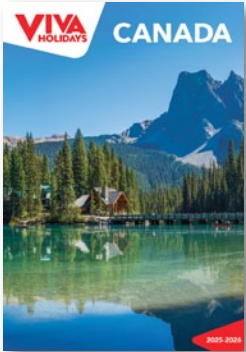
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Viva Holidays - Canada 2025/26
Helloworld's wholesale brand Viva Holidays has released its 2025/26 Canada brochure earlier than initially planned, as the market enjoys a spike in interest from Australian travellers. The latest collection of tours range from self-drive holidays to escorted tours and scenic rail journeys. Hot off the press, the publication also features a wide range of accommodation and touring options to help travel advisors plan new adventurous ways to explore Canada. These include new luxury accommodation and touring options in Vancouver, in addition to a wider array of Northern Lights experience packages in Manitoba and the Northwest Territories.



Bunnik Tours - Asia 2025/26
Small group touring specialist Bunnik Tours has unveiled its range of travel options on offer in Asia and the Middle East for 2025/26. The operator claims its collection in the regions is unique because of its blend of organised sightseeing, special local experiences, as well as time to enjoy independent exploration. Group size is capped at 20 travellers and 16 on deluxe tours, with all tours in Asia and the Middle East deploying spacious coaches so that attractions can be visited in comfort. One of the key focuses for Bunnik is Egypt, a market the brand specialises in. The brochure includes short- and long-range itineraries to Egypt and Jordan, as well as an independent travel package to Oman.



Viva Holidays - Queensland 2025/26
Viva Holidays' Queensland brochure for 2025/26 is the first of its domestic range to launch for the period. Contained in the booklet is a wide range of accommodation and touring options, including popular hotels located in the heart of Brisbane, as well as resort-style accommodation on the beaches of the Gold and Sunshine Coasts. For those travelling farther north, Viva has plenty of suggestions for the Southern Great Barrier Reef, the Whitsundays & Tropical North Qld.

Agents sail to discover



PRINCESS Cruises recently hosted Australian and New Zealand travel agents on board *Discovery Princess* to experience what the ship has to offer Aussies ahead of her inaugural season Down Under.

Five travel agents from Cruiseabout, Andrew Jones Travel, Clean Cruising, I Love Cruising, and House of Travel NZ joined Princess Cruises reps for a seven-night 'Wine Country Cruise', travelling from Vancouver to Los Angeles via Victoria, San Francisco and San Diego.

Advisors experienced a range of premium dining experiences, including an exclusive dinner at Magic Castle (pictured) as part of Princess Cruises' Spellbound collaboration on *Sun Princess*.

Discovery Princess will arrive in Australia in 2025.

BIG4 says to go big

A NEW campaign from BIG4 Holiday Parks is encouraging Aussie families to "go small to go big" by booking a getaway at one of its parks this summer, instead of an overseas holiday.

Marking the third campaign from the operator's Go Big platform, which launched last year, the marketing push depicts images of happy holidaymakers of various ages, and compares the pitfalls of international travel (such as enduring long-haul flights) with the benefits of a BIG4 Holiday Park stay.

The new campaign creative will run in market across OOH, radio, and digital channels from now until Jan 2025.

Vietjet profit boom

VIETJET saw an 884% leap in after-tax profit for its air transport revenue during the first nine months of 2024, reaching approx. US\$44.58 million, and a 32% increase in revenue.

The carrier served over 19.6 million passengers on 104,000 flights from Jan-Sep 2024, increasing by more than 6% and 2% YoY, respectively, with a 9.1% rise in international passengers.

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*Prices shown are in AUD per person based on a Double Guest Room with Veranda, and subject to availability. Offer ends November 30 2024. Please visit our offers page for all other current offers. Please see www.crystalcruises.com for full terms and conditions.



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