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Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today features five pages of the all latest travel industry news, plus full pages from:

- Disney Cruise Line
- ATIA - NTIA 2024

EES to be phased in

MORE delays to the introduction of the European Union's Entry-Exit System (EES) have come after the EU Government admitted the technology was still not ready.

The European travel industry had already warned of lengthy delays at airports if the system was introduced on its previously confirmed date of 10 Nov.

It's now expected the biometric system will be progressively phased into service by mid-2025.

WebBeds TTV booming

WEB Travel Group continues to soar to new heights, with the company reporting a 26% boost in Total Transaction Value (TTV) for the six months ending 30 Sep 2024, with bookings up 22%.

In an update to the Australian Securities Exchange this morning, the company, which was recently demerged from its former parent Webjet, reaffirmed its commitment to hit \$10 billion in TTV by FY30 (**TD** 29 Aug).

Despite the strong growth, the company tempered expectations by confirming the half-year results were impacted by the collapse earlier this year of German touring giant FTI Group.

Also skewing the results were major events such as the Paris Olympic Games and the European Football Championships, held across eight cities in Germany.

As a result, Web Travel Group said its European margins were "subdued" with overall margins affected by financial incentive agreements with suppliers, which are currently under review.

The company said TTV and revenue margins for the first half of 2025 were expected to be down slightly from a previously estimated 7% to 6.4%, with expenses staying consistent. *ML*

ATIA gives thanks

AS THE 2024 National Travel Industry Awards (NTIA) approaches, the Australia Travel Industry Association (ATIA) is expressing thanks to the event's 31 sponsors, led by Singapore Airlines as major sponsor and Viking for the NTIA Finalist Party.

See the **back page** to learn which brands are backing the awards.

CVFR aiming at NZ

CVFR Payments will soon expand its travel payment service brand to New Zealand, the company has confirmed.

CEO Ram Chhabra said the payments division has been its fastest growing due to its market-leading and secure payment tech making it easy for agents to accept payment from their clients.

A launch date of CVFR Payments New Zealand is yet to be advised.

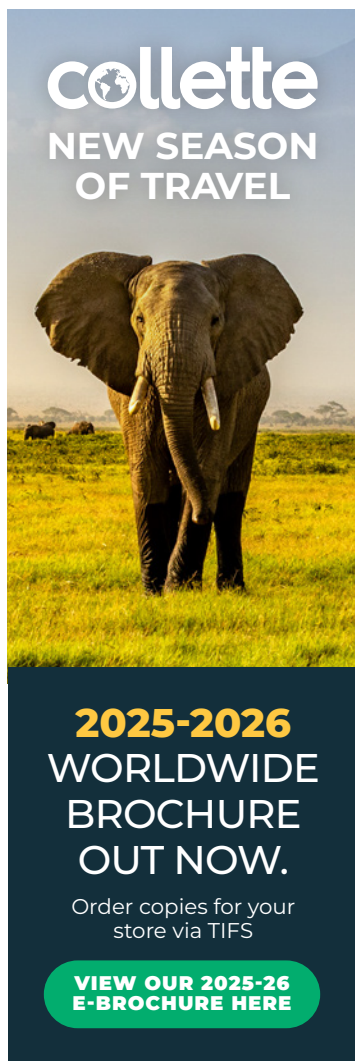
Expeditions in focus

WEEK three of CLIA Cruise Month sees the sector zoning in on expedition cruising to far-flung corners of the planet.


The latest theme in the four-week annual cruising showcase comes as expedition lines invest heavily in more technologically advanced ships with sustainability initiatives at the forefront.

"The number of people taking expedition cruises has risen by more than 70% since 2019, reflecting the incredible opportunities available on expedition ships in some of the world's most remote destinations," said CLIA Australasia Managing Director, Joel Katz.

Agents can explore Expedition Week with new training webinars and promotions from CLIA lines.



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Boeing restructure

BOEING will reduce its workforce by around 10% and push back first deliveries of its 777X to 2026 as ongoing strikes and scrutiny take its toll on the embattled plane manufacturer.

In an impassioned letter to staff on Fri, CEO Kelly Ortberg said the company was in “a difficult position” and said tough decisions and structural changes had to be made to ensure it could “stay competitive and deliver for our customers over the long term”.

Ortberg acknowledged the challenges endured by the 777X development program, including a pause in testing and ongoing worker strikes, with customers being notified of the latest pushback to the delivery timeline.

The Boeing 777X first flew in Jan 2020 and has been delayed numerous times, with the current order book for the Dash-8 and Dash-9 varieties sitting at just over 500 passenger and freighter planes for more than 13 airlines.

Vale father of Qld tourism

THE Australian travel industry is mourning the loss of Sir Frank Moore (**pictured**), who was widely acknowledged as the ‘father of Queensland tourism’.

Over a period of four decades, Moore played a pivotal role in shaping the direction and growth of Queensland’s tourism industry, helping to establish what would eventually become Tourism and Events Queensland (TEQ), which he chaired until 1990.

Moore went on to chair the Australian Tourism Industry Association and the Australian Tourism Research Institute, where his leadership was crucial in securing major investments in tourism research and education.

The industry stalwart also served as chair of the Federal Government’s Tourism Forecasting Council, Advent Tourism Fund Management Ltd, Great Southern Railway and many more.

Moore’s longstanding career



also saw him become a founding Director of Jupiters Limited, as well as Director of the Gold Coast Airport Corporation.

In 1983, Moore was recognised for his contributions to community and the tourism industry when he was made a Knight Bachelor and later appointed an Officer of the Order of Australia in 1991.

“We mourn the loss of a revered and much-loved professional, mentor and colleague,” TEQ stated, adding “his legacy and impact will continue to shape the future of Australian tourism and inspire the success of our industry for generations to come”. *JM*

NZ CHOGM boost

AIR New Zealand has upped its capacity to Samoa by a third to meet demand for the upcoming Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM).

Between today and 31 Oct, the carrier will fly 25 return services between Auckland and Apia and has swapped single-aisle planes with twin-aisles for extra support for more than 9,000 pax booked.

Plan with your mind

TRAVELLERS can plan their next holiday using their subconscious mind at an activation hosted by IHG Hotels and Resorts taking place at SXSW Sydney this week.

The IHG Mind Lobby uses eye-tracking technology that monitors a user’s reactions to a series of travel-related videos shown over 60 seconds, before revealing the desired holiday and travel style.

The activation can be found on the forecourt of the ICC Sydney throughout the week-long event.

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Airport Safety Week

MAJOR Australian airports are this week hosting a series of events and activities to raise awareness of Airport Safety Week.

The activation, led by the Australian Airports Association (AAA), aims to shine a light on both physical and psychological safety of airport staff and the communities they serve in an effort to share ideas and improve overall risk management.

"If workers are experiencing adverse mental health or negative social influences in the community, we need better education about these challenges and to let them know we are always there to support them," said AAA Head of Policy and Advocacy, Natalie Heazlewood.

"This week helps our members connect and share ideas, boosting collective knowledge that will flow onto improved risk management systems and a safety-focused culture."

Telling the story of cruise



THE cruise industry needs to do more to tell the story of its commitment to sustainability, outgoing Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA) President & Chief Executive Officer Kelly Craighead believes.

The sector should be openly proud of the work it does to make tourism more sustainable,

she said at a CLIA and Business Sydney luncheon on Fri.

"I would like for the cruise industry to be recognised for the leadership it has played in advancing their environmental sustainability efforts," Craighead noted in a fireside chat moderated by **Travel Daily** Publisher, Damian Francis.

"I personally think the future of tourism can be seen in the make up and the design of these ships," she added.

"They recycle more than a small city; if we want to talk about water challenges, they have developed technologies where 95% of all the water they need can be made on board."

The luncheon was attended by members of the cruise and Business Sydney communities including New South Wales Minister for Tourism, John Graham, and local CLIA Managing Director Joel Katz, with the trio **pictured** above - read more in today's **Cruise Weekly**. *MS*



Window Seat

EVER wondered what it would feel like to have a whole plane to yourself?

Now you can experience exactly that, thanks to a hotel in Amsterdam, which has launched a 'Cockpit Suite' featuring the entire fuselage - cockpit and the front seating section - of a real Boeing 737.

The unique room is available to book at the Corendon Amsterdam New-West, a Tribute Portfolio Hotel, for less than US\$300 per night.

After entering room 737, guests will see a short set of three steps leading into the rear of the fuselage area, which contains three rows of blue leather seats, the small galley, and the full cockpit.

Aviation geeks can play with the all the controls in the cockpit, while also planespotting out of the room's floor-to-ceiling windows, which face southwest toward Amsterdam Airport Schiphol.

Originally part of KLM's fleet, the plane has been repainted with Corendon's logo.

Pandemic hurdle cleared

GLOBAL travel and tourism spending has officially surpassed pre-pandemic levels, with totalled receipts from 2023 amounting to more than \$1.5 trillion, leading research firm Phocuswright says.

With the pandemic now largely in the rear-view mirror, Phocuswright's new *Global Travel Market Report* for 2024 projects the sector to steam ahead with annual growth of between 6-10%.

The report cements the trajectory of online bookings as the dominant intermediary in travel, with 65% of all bookings to be made via online channels by 2026 - up from 61% last year.

Commenting on the report, ATIA Director of Public Policy and Advocacy, Ingrid Fraser, told **Travel Daily** it was an exciting time to be in the travel industry.

"The recent Phocuswright report highlighting a 24% growth in the global travel market, with spending reaching \$1.5 trillion

in 2023, confirms what we've all been experiencing firsthand - travel is back, bigger than ever.

"The reality is that there would hardly be a member who doesn't have a strong online presence, with an increasing number providing online solutions that allow them to tailor support, reflecting the fact that we increasingly live our lives digitally and the report's projections that 65% of bookings will be made online by 2026 are no surprise."

Fraser added that as the sector continues to grow, the value of a travel professional is more highly sought now than ever.

"ATIA is committed to equipping our members with the tools and strategies they need to thrive in this evolving landscape.

"We will continue to focus on helping our members seize these opportunities and meet the ever-increasing expectations of travellers," Fraser concluded. *ML*

Aircalin adds Paris

FROM 11 Dec, Aircalin will launch direct flights between Paris and Noumea via Bangkok.

The service is also open for sale as a Paris-Bangkok line, flying directly from the French capital to Thailand as a final destination or for a free stopover before continuing to New Caledonia.

Lebanon update

THE last Australian Government-assisted departure flights from Beirut, Lebanon took off yesterday, with no further flights scheduled.

DFAT is continuing to advise Australians not to travel to Lebanon due to the volatile security situation, and urges those who are there to take the first available flight out of the country while Beirut airport remains open.

Australian citizens in Lebanon can register with DFAT's crisis portal, and contact the Australian Government's 24-hour Consular Emergency Centre for assistance.



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G'Day to a new workspace



G'DAY Group celebrated the opening of its new Adelaide support office last week with a morning tea and ribbon-cutting ceremony, with special guest South Australian Tourism Minister Zoe Bettison.

Located in the Rundle Mall Plaza building, the new workspace reflects the brand's continued growth and commitment to offering local South Australian job pathways and careers in tourism.

More than 300 staff are now based at the open-plan, single-floor workspace, where they will support more than 2,500 team members across G'Day Group's national network of 330 holiday parks and resorts.

The Group contributes more than \$315 million in economic activity to South Australia and

accommodates 455,000 visitor nights in SA alone. *JM*

Pictured: Bettison cutting the ribbon to mark the opening of G'day Group's new offices with Founder and CEO, Grant Wilckens.

SAA boosts Perth

SOUTH African Airways will ramp up its flight frequencies beginning next month, including routes to Perth.

The carrier will operate twice daily flights between the WA capital and Mauritius from the beginning of Dec to coincide with peak holiday season.

Last month, the SAA also announced it will boost frequencies on its nonstop flights between Perth and Johannesburg from Dec.

Affluent market is ripe

AUSTRALIA is a top destination choice among mass-affluent Asian travellers who are planning their next overseas trip, new research from Expedia Group shows.

The study looks at the preferences of the growing Asian middle class, which is expected to reach 3.5 billion people and make up two-thirds of the world's middle class by 2030.

Four in five (81%) mass-affluent Asian travellers report that travel is still a priority despite inflation, with this segment planning to spend an average of 23% of their income on a holiday in the next 12 months.

On average, these travellers intend to visit four destinations over 10 days for their next international holiday, with Australia, Japan, the US, Canada, France, South Korea, and Germany leading the list.

Nearly two in five (39%) of the 4,000 respondents said they would prioritise travel over buying a new car or upgrading electronics, and close to one in three (32%) on dining out.

When it comes to travel planning, more than one in three respondents relied on travel agents, and the majority (72%) said they use platforms like Expedia when booking.

The survey also found that mass-affluent Asian travellers seek out premium amenities and high-end accommodations, with 93% intending to splurge on

luxuries such as flight and room upgrades, and private tours.

"The mass-affluent consumer market in Asia is rapidly emerging as one of the most crucial population segments to reach and serve," said Peter O'Connor, Co-Director of the Centre for Enterprise Dynamics in Global Economies at the University of SA.

"With their inclination towards long-haul trips and a preference for luxury amenities, they are poised to significantly impact the travel economy, as indicated by this research." *JM*

La to rep Barriere

LA COLLECTION has been appointed as the Australia and New Zealand representative of the two flagship Fouquet's properties owned by Groupe Barriere.

The partnership will see the first US property added to La Collection's portfolio, with the luxury group welcoming Fouquet's New York into the fold, as well as Hotel Fouquet's Paris.

"We are thrilled to add the iconic Fouquet's properties to our portfolio, including our first American property," commented Craig Farrell, La Collection's Co-Founder & Director of Sales.

"Groupe Barriere's commitment to excellence and innovation is aligned with our own values, and we are confident that these hotels will be a huge success in Australia and New Zealand."



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Grand Pacific Tours - NZ Coach Holidays 2025/26

Grand Pacific Tours, the New Zealand coach holiday specialist, has launched its latest brochure showcasing departures between 1 Sep 2025 - 31 May 2026. Travellers can choose between an Ultimate Small Group Tour, boasting a business class level of comfort with only 20 luxury leather seats, or a Signature Mid-Size Group Tour, enjoying premium economy comfort onboard a coach with 32 seats. There are a range of itineraries to choose from between nine and 19 days in length, with more than 230 guaranteed departure dates available.



MSC Cruises - Seasational Sale Brochure

The latest mini sale brochure from MSC Cruises showcases the Seasational Sale on selected sailings from Apr to Nov 2025. Guests can enjoy up to 25% off their cruise fare, up to \$1,000 onboard credit per cabin, or select from over 150 sailings where kids cruise free. Combine with the Easy Plus drinks package to save up to 40% off the onboard drinks package cost. Choose from stunning itineraries in some of the world's most sought-after destinations across the Mediterranean & Northern Europe, Caribbean and the Far East. Speak to your MSC Cruises BDM for a copy.

Skills top-of-mind for AA



SKILLS, training and Western Sydney growth were the top discussion points at the recent Accommodation Australia (AA) NSW State Advisory Committee meeting, bringing together iconic hospitality brands and hotels.

AA NSW General Manager Stacey McBride highlighted the ideal timing of meeting, which came just days before the State Government released its Visitor Economy Strategy Review on Wed (10 Oct).

"Skills, migration and training are always a focus at our meetings as we look at ways to end the chronic staff shortages most of our members face, particularly in regional areas," McBride said.

She highlighted the need for a renewed push to inspire young people to choose hospitality as their career path, with TAFE and apprenticeships a particularly hot talking point.

"AA NSW had also taken part in discussions around the Government's new Visitor Economy Strategy Review, so it was great to...hear the Premier announce a push to prioritise events, conference facilities and

infrastructure including 40,000 new hotel rooms," McBride said.

AA also supports the State Government's focus on Greater Sydney ahead of the Western Sydney Airport opening in 2026.

"There is a real need to expand hotel room capacity in the west and in some regional areas to ensure we continue to meet demand," McBride said. *JM*

Vietjet discounts tax

AUSSIES can score cheap seats to Vietnam thanks to new deals from Vietjet starting from A\$199, available to purchase until 17 Oct.

The discounted tickets are available between Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane and Perth, and Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City, for travel between 15 Nov 2025 and 22 May 2025.

Travellers from Australia can also enjoy a 20% discount on business class fares by using the code LEADER20 when booking on Vietjet's website, app or via authorised travel agents.

Additionally, customers who book Vietjet's Diwali Sky Deals have a chance to win up to 50% off at Furama Resort Danang.

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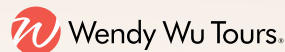
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