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Thursday 17th Oct 2024

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Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today features seven pages of news including Business Events News and a Photo Page from **APT Travel Group,** plus a cover wrap from Globus and a full page from A Force for Good.

Geraghty to exit

AIR New Zealand Chief **Customer and Sales Officer** Leanne Geraghty will depart in Jan 2025 after more than two decades with the carrier.

Geraghty was formerly the General Manager Australia for the brand before relocating to New Zealand in 2016 to take up a regional GM promotion.

"Geraghty has put our customers, people and partners at the heart of every decision, & we have been incredibly lucky to have her as an ambassador," Air NZ CEO Greg Foran said.

Air NZ said the process to fill her position will commence shortly.

Velocity's gold stamp

VIRGIN Australia has announced a raft of changes to its Velocity loyalty program, including a new Forever Gold status to reward long-standing membership (TD breaking news).

Forever Gold will provide permanent lifetime benefits for members when it is introduced on 01 Oct next year, including access to Virgin and select partner lounges, priority checkin and boarding, as well as preferential seating.

The new reward tier will be open to members who have earned 12,000 status credits dating back to 01 Feb 2013, with a minimum of 9,000 from

A force for speakers

HEAR from industry legends such as Intrepid Travel co-founder Geoff Manchester and travel icon Wendy Wu at A Force for Good on 07 Mar - see the back page.

Virgin Australia marketed flights, excluding extras earned from family pooling, partner airlines, credit cards or shopping programs such as FlyBuys.

Velocity will also expand its status tiers for the first time since 2011 via the introduction of Platinum Plus from 01 Oct, designed to reward Velocity's most frequent flyers who will be classified as a 'VIP' across all stages of the journey.

Platinum Plus members will have access to an Australianbased VIP phone service, priority recognition when booking and flying, the ability to gift a companion membership, as well as four complimentary business class upgrades that can be used on both Flex and Choice fares.

Platinum Plus status will be given to members with 2,000 status credits over a 12-month period, with at least 1,500 coming from VA operated flights. AB

Win with Globus

TRAVEL agents have the chance to win \$1,000 a day in a new Globus giveaway.

To take part, between 01 Oct and 01 Nov, advisors must make a deposited booking with GFOB brands for 2025 trips.

See the **front page** for details.

Regatta ships out

OCEANIA Cruises has released its 2026 collection of global voyages, which confirms longstanding homeport vessel Regatta has been redeployed to charter a world cruise with My Cruises.

However, the popular Norwegian Cruise Line Holdings brand will still offer cruisers several local region sailings aboard Vista, Riviera and Sirena.

These include a 21-day Bali to Sydney voyage and an Auckland to Sydney sailing aboard Riviera, a Papeete to Sydney cruise on Vista, and a Bali to Papeete sailing on Sirena - see CW for more.





From now until 15 November 2024, your clients can enjoy

free return flights on 2025-2027 river voyages, and their companion can fly free on 2025-2027 ocean and expedition voyages.

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See website for T&Cs





TTC adds two major brands to TAP

AAT Kings' Guided Holidays and Inspiring Journeys products are now fully bookable through The Travel Corporation's Travel Agent Portal (TAP), under a new technology revamp revealed by touring company.

TTC said the enhancement means the two brands are now in alignment with sister offerings, ensuring that agents have easy access to all information and booking tools in one platform.

Through the TAP portal, travel advisors can now:

- book AAT Kings first choice, best buys and day tours
- book Inspiring Journeys itineraries
- make payments
- search past bookings
- access the latest deals



Agents already registered on TAP with TTC's single sign-on can continue using their existing login credentials to book AAT Kings and Inspiring Journeys products, however users are encouraged to contact their AAT Kings sales manager for additional support regarding logins and training.

Air India fast-tracks agent distribution

AIR India has announced it is accelerating the launch of NDC content to service connected agencies, only a month after signing an initial agreement with the distributor (*TD* 06 Sep).

In Sep, Air India heralded the agreement as a "significant milestone" for its distribution strategy, and today Travelport hailed the importance of India's largest airline pushing ahead with its courting of travel agents.

"Our partnership is centred around our shared belief that agencies are an essential retailing channel to provide travellers with seamless, personalised experiences for every trip,"

Travelport said.

The news follows Air India formally announcing the order of 85 A320s and A350s as part of a major global expansion plan.

The carrier has hinted in recent months that Down Under is a key market for future expansion, fuelled mainly by a big upswing in travel between India and Australia over the last year.



"Moving our bookings to the TTC TAP is just another way we're streamlining the booking experience for our agents," AAT Kings Group CEO Ben Hall said.

"We are committed to providing our partners with the tools they need to deliver exceptional travel experiences."

In further tech advancements, AAT Kings has launched a new website that offers an enhanced user experience for both travel agents and guests.

Agents can now experience a sleeker and more intuitive interface that simplifies searches, allows for more dynamic content, and introduces a range of personalised touchpoints.

The new website also features Storybook for AAT Kings and Journal for Inspiring Journeys, new blogs designed as hubs of travel information.

MEANWHILE, AAT Kings is offering exclusive deals until 15 Jan, giving travellers access to savings of up to \$4,900 per couple on selected tours. *AB*

Singapore splits

SINGAPORE Airlines' Darwin to Singapore operations will introduce a split tranche service from 30 Mar 2025, a move designed to offer more flexibility and improved connections to onward international hubs.

The new timings, operating three times a week, will arrive early in the morning Singapore time to facilitate connections to London, Paris and Frankfurt.

Singapore Airlines will also change the schedule from Adelaide for the same rationale, with five flights to depart in the morning and five flights in the afternoon so that Aussie travellers can connect to a host of European ports.

These changes include more seamless passage to the popular hubs of London, Paris, Copenhagen, and Brussels.

Refund toll hits 10k

HELLOWORLD'S SmartRefunds system has already notched up 10,000 users following a fast takeup rate since its launch last year.

Owned and operated by Helloworld Travel's Air Tickets, the platform provides instant refunds to help propel travel agent efficiency via the GDS.

"We recognised challenges in the market relating to the complexity of the refund process, so we set out to create and offer an automated solution," Air Tickets Business Systems Manager Diana Mufic said, one of the chief architects of the tool.

"It vastly increases agent productivity, saving between 15 and 60 minutes per refund, offering online capabilities whilst eliminating frequent touchpoints and follow-ups," she added.







Qantas reinforces Pacific

QANTAS' new routes to Palau and New Caledonia (*TD* breaking news yesterday) will help to strengthen relationships with the two South Pacific islands, according to statements from both tourism bodies.

"This connection will make it even easier for Australians to explore Palau's pristine waters, world-renowned dive sites and rich cultural heritage," Kadoi Ruluked, Director of Palau Visitors Authority told *Travel Daily*.

"The 'Palau Paradise Express' will not only boost tourism but also strengthen trade, cultural exchanges and economic ties between Palau and Australia."

Similarly, New Caledonia is pleased with the return of its Qantas connection.

"We are delighted to welcome back Qantas' direct flights from Brisbane to Noumea later this year, marking a new chapter for New Caledonia as we regain our calm and readiness to welcome travellers," New Caledonia Tourism Australia Account Director Rebecca Marchal said.

"The resumption of flights reflects Qantas' trust in our bright future, and we look forward to sharing the resilience and charm

Luxperience predicts

FLIGHT Centre Travel Group's Luxperience event has inked a new deal with The Future Laboratory, which will see guests at the upcoming gathering provided with exclusive luxury traveller insights.

The intelligence will cover consumer behaviour, market dynamics and emerging trends, to be contained in new, yet-to-be-released research report.

"Our mission is to drive innovation in the luxury travel...& by partnering with The Future Lab, we can support our luxury guests with high-quality data that will assist them to future-proof businesses," Luxperience said.

of our islands with Australian visitors," she added.

Yesterday, the Flying Kangaroo announced an extra 220,000 more seats in its international network over the next 12 months.

Changes in key routes to the US, Asia and the Pacific were also announced, including increased frequencies to Dallas, Los Angeles and New York.

Qantas will cease flying between Sydney and Seoul, while Jetstar's flights to the city will rise from four per week to daily. JHM

NTIAs are a sellout

TICKETS to the 2024 National Travel Industry Awards (NTIAs) have officially sold out, with the high demand seeing a record 200 people on the waitlist.

The Australian Travel Industry Association (ATIA) said that extra tables have been added to meet most of the demand, while maintaining the premier experience attendees expect, however some individuals will not be accommodated.

Just over 1,300 people will attend the travel industry's night of nights in Sydney on 26 Oct.

"We are thrilled that NTIA is becoming more and more popular, with tickets selling out quicker each year," ATIA CEO Dean Long said.

"The travel industry has come a long way in the last year, and it is wonderful to see so many wanting to celebrate the latest accomplishments of those driving the industry forward."

Incentive on track

INTERNATIONAL Rail has launched a new agent incentive with Eurail, with sellers able to secure a \$100 prepaid VISA voucher when Eurail sales are in excess of \$1,500 or more.

The offer is valid for bookings made between 15-22 Oct, and has been timed for clients looking at European winter festivities.



Queenstown on show in Oz



AROUND 400 tourism industry professionals took part in the Queenstown Lakes Australia Roadshow in Sydney, which wraps up today in Brisbane.

Set up to show off the year-round diversity of tourism in the region, the roadshow featured offerings from Queenstown and the surrounding towns of Glenorchy, Arrowtown, Kingston and Gibbston, with 34 suppliers in attendance.

Speaking with *Travel Daily*,
Destination Queenstown BDM
- Western, Linda McIntosh said
the Queenstown Lakes Australia
Roadshow for 2024 was the
largest contingent of operators to
make the trip across the ditch.

"In Melbourne and Brisbane, we combined travel trade and business events, while Sydney had two separate events," McIntosh explained.

"It's a great opportunity for us, and Australia is our largest inbound market thanks to direct connectivity, so it's important we give travel professionals the opportunity to engage with each other," she added.

Among the suppliers involved was nzbiketrails' owner David Goadby, who said it was a crucial event for suppliers with a great opportunity presenting itself to grow the already strong Australian market.

"It's very important, we are a relatively new business and a third of our business is from Australia - we want to build it and help people travel and have greater experiences," he said.

"We are expanding our vans and the trails we cover." *DF*

Pictured: Linda McIntosh and Sarah McDonald from Destination Queenstown in Sydney yesterday.



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Heavy hitters join event

NEW industry experts have just been added to the Home Ex speaker line-up, including Helloworld COO and Executive Director Cinzia Burnes and itravel CEO. Steve Labroski.

Burnes will share her expert insights into what factors are driving Helloworld's ongoing success, as well as the lessons that home-based travel agents can learn from in order to grow their own businesses, while Labroski will form part of a exciting series called, 'Helpful advice for hungry advisors'.

Other speakers at Home Ex include Wendy Wu; GetAboutAble CEO Gemma Axford; and Mike & Mandy Dwyer from Main Beach Travel, with more speaker to revealed soon.

Hosted by Travel Daily, Home Ex is a new on-demand virtual experience, aimed at home-based travel agents and accessible to the entire travel industry. It will



be jam-packed with inspiring and practical learning videos from experts to help power up advisors' businesses.

Home Ex will also feature a virtual expo to facilitate conversations between suppliers and home-based agents.

The virtual experience will launch on 10 March and all content will be available for six months for the industry to access at their leisure.

Home Ex is free to register for the whole industry.

CLICK HERE for details. JHM



Stay Updated

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Hilton enters Tassie

DOUBLETREE by Hilton Hobart has opened this week, offering guests a newly-built 206-room hotel on Macquarie Street in the Tasmanian capital.

The first Hilton hotel to debut in the state, the luxury property boasts a heated indoor pool, sauna, gymnasium, as well as two meeting spaces.

"We know Tasmania has what the world wants, and it is a testament to our exceptional destination offering that a brand as reputable as Hilton has launched here in Hobart," Tasmanian Premier Jeremy Rockliff said.

"Adding more than 200 premium hotel rooms to the state's landscape will support our tourism sector and help keep our economy strong."





Window

MADAME Tussauds Sydney has unveiled Australian drummer, singer, songwriter and producer G Flip as its latest wax figure.

Not only will tourists be excited by the new addition, but is also marks the first time the company has installed a non-binary wax figure.

"Representation has never been more important and it's a true honour to be the first non-binary celebrity to have their own wax figure at Madame Tussauds Sydney," G Flip enthused.



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We're well connected



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APT Travel Group celebrate VIP agents

APT and Travelmarvel are thrilled to announce the remarkable achievements of its top-performing agencies, who have once again qualified as Diamond partners in the prestigious VIP program.

This incredible milestone underscores the strength of collaboration and the shared commitment to success.

Scott Ellis, Chief Sales Officer of the APT Travel Group, expressed his excitement, saying, "At APT and Travelmarvel, we're all about building fantastic partnerships with travel agents that drive real success".

SURAJ Arachchige and Georgina Chamarenko from Helloworld Travel Booval with Madi Schaumberg (APT BDM).



"With the largest sales force in the industry, we're here to support your business every step of the way."

This celebration highlights the value of partnership, and APT and Travelmarvel invite travel agents to see how they can become part of this winning team.



WADE Owen, Sharna Laidlaw, and Tyler Sanders from Flight Centre Port Macquarie with Sandy Allan (APT BDM).



GLOBAL Journeys.



JOANNE Langdon & Wendy Acton from Helloworld Travel Sunbury.



FLIGHT Centre Greensborough.



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Specialist Agency



GOING Global Narellan.



CASSANDRA O'Bryan and Lisa Gair from Travel and Cruise Belrose, with Sandy Allan (APT BDM).

Speciali



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What's up, doc?

GLOBAL medical research conference, the World Congress of Gastroenterology, is coming to Victoria next year.

Melbourne will welcome 3,000 gastroenterology experts, thanks to Victorian State Government's Business **Events Fund**

MCEC will host the conference from 20-22 Sep.

Be a trailblazer

THE Brisbane Economic Development Agency (BEDA) is inviting submissions for its Convention Trailblazer Grant, enlisted to help bring conferences to the Queensland capital.

The grant, administered by BEDA, helps recipients attend international conferences and conventions, as a first step towards securing hosting rights for Brisbane in future years.

Applications for next year are open now, with recipients receiving up to \$5,000 to attend their nominated event, in a bid to strengthen their global networks and enhance Brisbane's conferencing reputation.

Successful applicants can use the grant to cover conference registration and travel costs - CLICK HERE for more information.

AIME REVEALS KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

TWO keynote speakers for the Asia Pacific Incentives & Meetings Event (AIME) 2025 program have been revealed, with neuroperformance scientist Kristy Goodwin and former Lonely Planet executive Gus Balbontin joining the event.

Next year's AIME will take place in Melbourne in Feb under the theme, "We Matter!".

Goodwin will be one of the headliners of AIME's Knowledge Program, which will focus on the global business events industry as a driver of economic growth.

She is celebrated for turning neuroscience and technology research into performanceboosting strategies, and will be charged with delivering the keynote address.

Meanwhile, Balbontin, a former director and Chief Technology Officer of Lonely Planet, will take a disruptive approach to innovation in his keynote.

He will challenge the audience



to embrace discomfort as the starting point for breakthrough ideas in his keynote, which will be sponsored by ICMI.

AIME Event Director Silke Calder said the keynote speakers reflect and highlight the broader aims of the Knowledge Program, which is to provide expert insights, inspiration and intelligence for event professionals.

"We are thrilled to have such inspirational and exciting speakers to launch the Knowledge Program at AIME 2025," she said.

"Each year the Knowledge Program continues to grow and is a key programming element of AIME, which bolsters our commitment to furthering education and professional growth opportunities for our industry," Calder added.

"We will be announcing the full program in the next few weeks."

AIME's Knowledge Program is expected to draw more than 1,500 event professionals, and is curated by BEAM experience founder El Kwang. MS

BCD releases annual trends report

BCD Meetings & Events has released its 2025 global trends report, What's Trending 2025, highlighting five essential destinations specifically geared toward incentive travel.

The report, sponsored by Minor Hotels, explores key trending themes across meetings and events, and has found destinations such as Aspen, Newquay, and Istanbul as key incentive travel locations for next year.

What's Trending 2025 also dives into topics such as how geopolitical influences, the need for personalisation, sustainability goals, and evolving technologies impact an organization's approach to their M&E programs.

CLICK HERE to download the full report.

You BET we love it

BUSINESS Events Tasmania (BET) has welcomed the resumption of Auckland to Hobart flights.

Chief Executive Officer Marnie Craig said BET is delighted to see the reintroduction of direct flights, and expects them to provide a welcome boost to the tourism and business events industry in Tasmania.



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Highly experienced cruise industry executive Michael Ungerer will rejoin A-Rosa River Cruises, a brand he helped create, as the Chairman of the line's advisory board. Most recently serving as CEO of startup luxury cruise brand Explora Journeys, Ungerer brings an extensive career in luxury to his new role, with a CV boasting stints at Norwegian Cruise Line, Carnival Corporation and Ritz-Carlton Hotel Company. His appointment comes as the line also begins the search for a new CEO, with Jorg Eichler stepping down from the role in the middle of 2025.

Tourism representation leader Canuckiwi has welcomed Peri McCardle to the team as Account Director Australia and New Zealand. Set to be based in Auckland, McCardle brings extensive experience in sales and marketing for destinations in North America, Australia, New Zealand and the South Pacific. Her initial focus with Canuckiwi will be with the company's Washington DC and Grapevine, Texas accounts.

After two decades away and with more than 50 countries explored, Matt Hill has returned to Adventure World as its new Performance Leader, based in the Sydney office. In Auckland, the tour operator has also hired Elly Wealthall as its new Latin America Destination Expert, applying her passion for the region to help agents and clients.

Brisbane's Hotel X, part of IHG Hotels and Resorts' Vignette Collection, has made four major managerial hires as it sets up to continue its growth trajectory into 2025, kicking off with Jeremy Colahan as its new General Manager. The property has also welcomed Sian Curtis as its new Director of Sales; Alannah Kanowski as Marketing Manager and **Tejal Narotam** as its new Business Development Manager.

Having lived and breathed Tahiti for more than a decade, Aranui Cruises has tapped into this experience and hired Moana McKeen as its New Zealand Business Development Manager, tasked with invigorating sales in the Kiwi market. McKeen said she is keen to hone in on the Marquesas Islands, the hotbed for Aranui, which has been sailing Tahiti for 40 years.

Bringing 10 years of marine experience to her new role, Daydream **Island Resort and Living Reef** has promoted **Lisa McMullen** to the role of Living Reef Manager. Her new role involves managing the health of resort marine life, including feeding schedules and overall maintenance. McMullen has risen through the ranks to her new position, previously holding roles of Reef Supervisor, Dive Instructor and Marine Educator.

Crowne Plaza Fiji has invested in its Australian team, welcoming Lisa Costello as its new Director of Sales. Based in Australia, Costello will drive strategic sales initiatives for the property, drawing on more than 20 years in hospitality and tourism. The experienced hospitality pro brings experience with many Fijian brands to her new role, including time with Crusoe's Retreat, Lalati Resort and Raffe Hotels & Resorts.



Making TIME for each other



MEMBERS of the TIME Queensland community enjoyed an evening of inspiration and connection recently during an

event hosted by Amadeus and Air Canada in South Brisbane.

Amadeus MD Kavlene Shuttlewood was guest speaker & discussed the value mentorship has brought to her career.

"It was wonderful to hear from an inspiring leader of Kaylene's calibre and her career journey to be where she is today," said Emily Foy, Qld state TIME representative.

"Kaylene is a valued member of the TIME program."

Past and present mentors and mentees attended the networking event, including past graduate Samantha Van Eldik from Adventure World and current mentee Janis McDonald Air Canada, who both spoke about their TIME experiences.

Pictured: Cameron Edwards. Amadeus; Mark Richards, Carnival Australia; Emily Foy, Snowscene; Kim Tomlinson, Travellers Choice and TIME

Mentorl Kaylene Shuttlewood, Amadeus and TIME Mentor; Janis, McDonald, Air Canada and TIME Graduate; Rachael Shortland, Amadeus; Samantha Van Eldik, Adventure World and TIME Graduate. JHM

Eco board changes

NEW board directors have been announced for Ecotourism Australia, including a new Chair Nat Burke, replacing Claire Ellis.

The WWF Head of Regenerative Climate will be joined by four new directors, who will serve a twoyear term.

Amy Gash of Lady Elliot Island Eco Resort, Jeff Gillies of Coral Expeditions, Sharon Raguse of Tourism Noosa, and David Young of Accor Pacific will all join the board, replacing Ellis, Caroline Densley of Diverse Travel and Janet Mackay of TRC Tourism.

Continuing their present terms will be Alysia Brandenburg of AbPs Consulting Services, Robert Taylor of WAITOC, and Wendy Hills of Wendy Hills Consulting.

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