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Save on the outback

ONLY a few days remain to save nearly \$3,000 on 2025 adventures with Outback Spirit, with discounts ending 31 Oct - find out more on the [cover page](#).

Learn more from Ama

AMAWATERWAYS Managing Director ANZ Steve Richards and Traveltek Head of Sales APAC Christian Sansom are hosting a trade webinar to relay exciting updates about the cruise line.

Among the updates will be the selling points of AmaWaterways' custom-designed ships, wellness programs, and how bookings can be made via Traveltek's platform.

There will also be a Q&A session to get under the skin of the brand's unique proposition.

Register [HERE](#) for the session, which takes place 12pm AEDT.

Don't overregulate STRA

THE NSW Tourism Association (NSWTA) believes greater regulation of the short-term rental accommodation (STRA) sector could hurt the tourism industry and the state's economy - particularly in regional areas.

In a position paper submitted to the NSW Government's ongoing review of STRA, NSWTA advocated for a "balanced approach" to policy reform that catered to the needs of housing affordability, as well as the NSW

visitor economy.

Among the reforms being considered is a cap on the number of STRA options in particular areas to ease the burden on renters.

However, the NSWTA argues that reducing availability will "diminish tourism spending and negatively impact local businesses, employment, and regional development".

Outside of tourism concerns, the body added that nightly caps on rentals might reduce affordable options for essential and emergency workers, stating that only 60% are for leisure.

The NSWTA has recommended existing STRA properties be immune from future reforms, oppose caps or restrictions on STRA to maintain flexibility and economic benefits, amend or remove registration fees, and exempt licensees from all additional STRA restrictions.

The NSW Govt is expected to deliver the results of its STRA review by the end of year. *AB*

Saving on Silversea

COMBINED savings of \$8,000 per suite on Silversea's 'Save, Indulge, Explore' offer are in market for a few more days - more details on [page eight](#).

VA wants call sooner

VIRGIN Australia has asked the ACCC to make a call on its proposed sale of 25% equity to Qatar Airways by Nov so it can launch flights to Doha in Jun '25.

"If VA is required to delay the launch and forward selling of the new services, it will lose the opportunity to make the most of these high seasonal demand windows to attract customers," the application said.

VA flights will not take off until Dec '25 without a Nov tick.



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Fill up empty rooms

HOTEL operators can employ a proven auction bidding formula to fill empty rooms during quieter periods and prevent zero revenue. See [page nine](#) for more details.

Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today features seven pages of news, including our **Sustainability** page, a photo page from **BNE**, plus a cover page from **Outback Spirit**, a product profile from **Travel Auctions** and a full page from **Silversea**.

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Celeb back in town

CELEBRITY Cruises' *Celebrity Edge* has returned to Australia for her second season Down Under.

The ship will offer 17 itineraries to 26 ports through to Apr.

These include new destinations such as Samoa, Fiji, American Samoa, and Tonga, with other highlights including 11- and 13-night NZ voyages, and a nine-night Australian Wine Cruise.

Celebrity Solstice will also return to the country for two departures from Sydney, on 19 Oct travelling up to Asia, and 09 Apr through Fiji and onto Hawaii.

"We're thrilled *Celebrity Edge* will be returning to Australia, NZ and the South Pacific for a second season, providing guests an unmatched cruise experience," the cruise line's President Laura Hodges Bethge said.



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Check out our new Outrigger



OUTRIGGER Hospitality Group has unveiled the all-new Outrigger Waikiki Paradise Hotel, which has expanded to the royal estate grounds historically known as 'Paradise Garden'.

The former Ohana Waikiki East is just steps from the beach, and has been transformed, with modern amenities.

Outrigger Waikiki Paradise (pictured) is also adjacent to the International Market Place, and features 443 newly renovated guestrooms and suites, as well as

dining venues Appetito Craft Pizza & Wine Bar, and Teppanyaki at Tanaka of Tokyo.

The hotel will also offer draw cards such as the Ka'iulani garden experience, which invites guests to hand-pick local flowers and create their own lei bracelets; as well as the weekly Aloha Sun Kanikapila music performances, bringing food and tunes poolside.

The hotel also boasts two conference rooms, a fully remodelled pool, and an advanced fitness centre.

"As our second property, Outrigger Waikiki Paradise Hotel blends Hawaii's vibrant cultural heritage with modern energy through local art and artisans," Outrigger Executive Vice President & Chief Commercial Officer Sean Dee said. *MS*

Polar player eyes Oz

ANTARCTIC expedition brand Polar Latitudes will expand into the Aussie market in a tie-up with Chimu Adventures and new investment partner Nordic Hamburg (TD 25 Sep).

The collaboration will see an expanded range of pre- and post-expedition extensions in Latin America marketed more widely in Australia via Chimu Adventures.

"Directly joining forces with Polar Latitudes and tapping into Nordic Hamburg's shipping prowess to operate, innovate and sell our combined tour offerings globally simply made sense," said Chimu Adventures Managing Director, Chad Carey.

The partnership will also grant Polar Latitudes access to Nordic Hamburg's new ship *Ocean Nova*.

Hilton Palm Cove

HILTON has announced it will open its third property in Far North Queensland during the first quarter of 2026, with the signing of Hilton Palm Cove Cairns and Resort & Spa.

Located within 25 minutes of Cairns and 40 minutes south of Port Douglas, the 140-key property will feature an outdoor pool, two dining outlets, one all-day dining restaurant, two bars, a kids club, fitness centre, spa, and 450m² of event space.

Tour guide support

THE Australian Tourism Export Council (ATEC) has praised the addition of tour guide to the latest Jobs and Skills Australia (JSA) Occupation Shortage List.

The addition follows the retention of travel consultant to the same list (*TD* 15 Oct), which sees the Federal Government tasked with addressing shortages through immigration policy.

ATEC Managing Director, Peter Shelley, said as international visitor markets return, especially from key markets such as China, India and Europe, the demand for qualified guides has grown.

"Tour guides are critical to delivering high-quality experiences to international visitors, and the demand for skilled guides is growing," Shelley said.



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More royals arrive in Sydney



ON THE same day that King Charles and Queen Camilla flew into Sydney, another royal - Cunard's *Queen Elizabeth* - made her arrival into the Harbour City, where she will homeport for the summer season.

The ship's entry into the Overseas Passenger Terminal yesterday marked 100 years of Cunard sailing to Australia, and signalled the official start of Carnival Corporation & plc's summer cruise season.

Jazzing up Moore Pk

THE NSW Government will work with the leaseholders of the Entertainment Quarter at Moore Park in Sydney to turn the site into a major tourism hub.

Currently managed by Carsingha Investments, the government wants the space to include a new indoor venue for events, boasting a capacity for 20,000 people, in addition to a range of new restaurants and bars.

Lord Mayor of Sydney Clover Moore welcomed the news of a new tender process to reinvigorate the site, adding that she would also like to see a theatre added to plans.

Previous attempts by leaseholders to expand development has been met with fierce resistance from residents.

If the tender is supported, work at the Entertainment Quarter will begin within the next two years.

More than 100 people gathered to celebrate the occasion, which featured musical performances, delicious morning tea, and speeches by Carnival Country Manager Peter Little and Cunard Vice President Matthew Gleaves.

Little spoke about Carnival group's nine brands - 17 ships in total - and how they will take hundreds of thousands of guests on fun and memorable holidays at sea this summer. *JM*

50 Degrees certainty

SCANDINAVIAN small group tour operator 50 Degrees North has guaranteed all scheduled departures on two of its most popular itineraries in 2025.

The guarantee applies to the eight-day 'Best of Norway' trip, which travels between Oslo and Bergen, visiting the Luster, Sognefjord, and the Flam Railway.

Those with more time can try the 16-day 'Scandinavian Capitals and Fjords' itinerary, which explores the famous fjords and visits capital cities in the region including Oslo, Copenhagen, Stockholm and Helsinki, and also includes a day trip to Tallinn.

Group sizes with 50 Degrees North are capped at 15 guests.



Japan insurance surges

THE number of Aussies taking out insurance policies for travel to Japan has surged by 61% when compared to pre-pandemic volumes, according to internal sales at 1Cover Travel Insurance.

Fuelled by a weakening yen, Aussies have been flocking to Japan in recent months, with the outbound market rising to become Australia's fourth most popular travel destination.

1Cover data has revealed that policies to Japan in 2024 have also spiked, with travellers in Jan taking out 24% more policies than Jan 2019, with the number rising to 60% YoY growth in Jul.

Spokesperson for 1Cover, Natalie Smith, said that while Japan has been consistently high in demand, sales have been particularly strong through the mid-year period.

"We saw a huge influx in Japan sales after border restrictions were lifted last year, and given the boost we witnessed mid-year, we foresee even bigger numbers by this year's end," she said.

Smith added that while Japan is considered a safe and low crime destination for Aussies, it is not immune to travel troubles.


"The Noto earthquake and

airline collision in Jan of this year are a stark reminder that Japan, like any destination, can be privy to unforeseen disasters.

"Australia and Japan do not share reciprocal healthcare agreements and medical treatment in Japan can be extremely costly," she added.

A significant number of the claims made via 1Cover have been related to snow sports, with injuries costing roughly \$20,000 on average, with patients usually requiring hospitalisation and a flight upgrade home.

Other common claims made in Japan were for hospital and medical expenses, missing luggage, as well as expenses incurred around flight cancellations and delays. *AB*




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Window Seat

A MAJOR cycling event that attracts thousands to Bowral in NSW has been scrapped on the morning of the race because of a “date stuff-up”.

The Bowral Classic has been operating for seven years without a major speed hump, but that all changed this week when the event’s traffic management partner failed to show up due to a wrong date being pencilled in the diary.

The key position satisfies legal safety requirements.

“Given the reams of communications and approvals necessary, we are shaking our heads in disbelief,” the event’s organiser said.

Altus Group also issued its own grovelling mea culpa, describing the failure as an “indefensible error”.

“Over the coming days we will be conducting a detailed review of the steps that led to the date of the event being miscommunicated to our field teams to ensure it can never happen again,” Altus said.

To grease the rather agitated wheels of cyclists, the Bowral Classic provided free food and beverages at Loseby Park later in the day.

“This stuff-up will be one for the record books and trust us when we say, it will not happen again next year.”

Trilogy in the Top End

MANAGEMENT brand Trilogy Hotels will stamp its mark on the Northern Territory by taking charge of three hotels as it enters the Top End for the first time.

Trilogy’s maiden portfolio comprises Novotel Darwin CBD, Frontier Hotel Darwin, and Smith Hotel Darwin, amounting to close to 420 guest rooms across the three properties.

On the back of increasing corporate demand and upgrades to the airport precinct, Trilogy Hotels CEO Scott Boyes said the company aims to drive the three hotels in line with the market’s expected strong rebound.

“The Northern Territory holds a special place in our hearts as a key market in Australia driven by its own unique demand trends, indigenous culture and world-class attractions,” Boyes said.

The largest of the three hotels, Smith Hotel Darwin, features 186 rooms, an outdoor swimming pool, a rooftop gym, along with an observation platform.

Novotel Darwin (pictured) greets guests to its 140 rooms with an internal rainforest atrium and cascading vines coupled with views over Darwin Harbour.

Finally, Frontier Hotel Darwin offers 91 rooms, a pool, fitness centre and a traditional pub known as The Punters Bar.

The addition of Novotel Darwin CBD, Frontier Hotel Darwin, and Smith Hotel Darwin continues the growth of a management portfolio now numbering 13



properties in Western Sydney, the Blue Mountains and Canberra.

Boyes said Trilogy will aim to drive common efficiencies across the three properties to leverage growth opportunities.

“We plan to showcase the best of Darwin’s food and beverage scene, champion local produce and people, specifically our hotel teams,” he added. ML

Six days in Yunnan

TRAVELLERS from 54 countries, including Australia and New Zealand, can now spend up to six days (144 hours) in Yunnan Province without a visa as part of China’s expanded transit policy.

The policy grants access to cities such as Kunming, Lijiang, Yuxi, Chuxiong, Dali, Xishuangbanna, Honghe, Wenshan and more.

Known as ‘Spring City’, highlights of the region include three natural heritage sites, Lugu Lake and plenty of rare wildlife.

Entry is via Kunming Airport, Lijiang Airport or Mohan Railway Station, with permission granted with presentation of valid docs and proof of onward travel.

CLICK HERE to find out more about Yunnan Province.

Long wait to cross

TRAVELLERS looking to cross the Bass Strait with large vehicles such as caravans on the *Spirit of Tasmania* may be waiting months to cross due to space shortages.

Despite cost blowouts and delays in construction, ferry operator TT Line has taken delivery of *Spirit of Tasmania IV*, one of two new ferries which have been built in Finland.

However, ongoing delays in modifying berthing facilities in Devenport mean TT Line may not be able to begin service with its new ferries until at least 2026.

Once operational, the new ferries will boost capacity per sailing from 1,400 pax to 1,800 with cabin inventory climbing from 222 to 301, and a 60% rise in space for large vehicles.

Agents win with UA

TRAVEL agents now have access to a wider range of United Airlines’ content through the Amadeus Travel Platform, thanks to a new partnership between the businesses.

The enhanced distribution agreement includes both New Distribution Capability (NDC) and EDIFACT content.

“Building upon our long-standing relationship with United Airlines will enable travel sellers to provide the full benefits of NDC content and technology to travellers in the United States and around the world,” said Kamal Singhee, SVP Airlines - North America at Amadeus.



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VN takes initiative

VIETNAM Airlines has restored more than 53 hectares of forest in Northwest Vietnam.

The feat was achieved after attracting over 62,000 donations from customers for its 'Contributing Leaves to the Forests' campaign, which launched in Jun in partnership with e-wallet application MoMo and non-profit environmental organisation Pan Nature.

Between Sep and Oct, the airline collected tonnes of plastic waste, upcycling it into useful items for locals as part of its 'Flying Light to Con Dao' campaign.

The initiative also educated over 2,000 students in Con Dao about environmental protection and plastic waste reduction in all local schools.

HX HAS NEW ECO PROJECT IN THE BAG

HX, FORMERLY known as Hurtigruten Expeditions, has partnered with renowned marine biologist and broadcaster, Monty Halls (pictured), to launch 'The Big Blue Bag' project.

Taking place on land in the UK, HX Foundation will fund a pilot of the citizen science initiative, which will aim to "revolutionise" public engagement around marine conservation.

The Big Blue Bag is designed to empower individuals of all ages to directly contribute to the protection of waterways and oceans, by providing them with a bag containing easy-to-follow protocols to collect key data on marine health, including microplastic pollution, species biodiversity, water temperature, and coastal debris.

The data will then be uploaded to a global, open-access database,



contributing to vital research that informs conservation efforts around the world.

The HX Foundation's funding will support the development of the digital platform and production of 50+ co-branded Big Blue Bags, which will be distributed to more than 50 different communities across the UK.

The project mirrors similar work that HX does for guests on board

its ships, including science centres and hands-on citizen science activities on all of the line's voyages, which sees HX donate over 18,000 cabin nights free to guest scientists each year.

"We are incredibly excited to collaborate with Monty Halls on The Big Blue Bag project," said Henrik Lund, Managing Director of the HX Foundation.

"This initiative aligns with our goal as a foundation of engaging the public in conservation efforts, while also furthering our commitment to protecting marine life.

"The project is a powerful tool for both education and action, inspiring individuals to make a meaningful impact."

The Big Blue Bag aims to expand into a nationwide initiative across the UK before rolling out in other countries like Australia. *JM*

MSC cares for coral

THE MSC Foundation has set the frame for its 2030 Roadmap for coral conservation based on discussions with 20 environmentalists and other experts during a recent three-day workshop held on board *MSC Seashore* and at Ocean Cay.

Additionally, the first construction phase of the Foundation's new marine conservation centre at Ocean Cay is just weeks from completion, with the research facility on track to be ready by Apr 2025.

Crystalbrook Kingsley gets the credit

CRYSTALBROOK Collection Hotels and Resorts' Newcastle property, Crystalbrook Kingsley, has been recognised as the leader for preservation and adaptive reuse in the Asia Pacific at the 2024 HICAP Sustainable Hotel Awards.

The NSW hotel was declared the winner of the 'Building, Renovation, Preservation, Adaptive Reuse and Conversion' category for the Asia Pacific region last week.



The award was bestowed in recognition of Crystalbrook Kingsley's renovation of the historic council administration centre, which preserved the building's historical and architectural integrity while transforming it into a luxurious and sustainable hotel.

Bawah eco report

BAWAH Reserve in Indonesia's remote Anambas Islands has shared its mid-year sustainability report, highlighting key achievements including coral restoration efforts across Bawah and surrounding islands.

This year, the luxury eco-resort also rescued over 24,000 turtle eggs and launched a project to empower local women to create eco-friendly fabrics.



China Eastern treats FCTG to dumplings

LAST week, Flight Centre Travel Group advisors in Brisbane had the opportunity to attend an informative seminar hosted by China Eastern Airlines, with support from Brisbane Airport.

The session provided a comprehensive update on the latest product offerings from the airline, equipping advisors with essential knowledge to enhance their client recommendations.

Following the seminar, the attendees were treated to a delightful dumpling masterclass presented by The Saucy Wench.

Participants rolled up their sleeves and prepared hundreds of delicious dumplings, which were then expertly cooked and served alongside a selection of The Saucy Wench's award-winning condiments to great delight.



FLIGHT Centre hosts China Eastern Airlines and Brisbane Airport teams at FCTG HQ to present to local advisors.



CAPTURING the moment - "1, 2, 3 - DUMPLINGS".



PENNY Qin, Amy Xu, Amy Hao and Flynn Yuan, China Eastern Airlines.



ADVISORS enjoyed an energetic live cooking demonstration from Lisa Liu, aka The Saucy Wench.



MAKING dumplings came naturally to Mahayla Ziebarth.



SILKY, delicious dumplings.



MAKING memories and dumplings - teamwork never tasted so good.



GABBY Gonzalez and Andrea Turner from FC Greenslopes with Amy Xu from China Eastern Airlines.



LATEST product updates from China Eastern Airlines and mastering the art of dumpling making.



MONEY

WELCOME to Money, *TD's* Tue feature on what the Australian dollar is doing.

AU\$1 = US\$0.665

WHATEVER your political views are, there's no denying most polls say the upcoming US Presidential Election will be almost too close to call.

This uncertainty is causing concern on global money markets, with the ASX falling sharply in early trade today.

With the Harris honeymoon over, market sentiment appears to be favouring a second Trump presidency, with stocks tipped to benefit long-term as taxes are cut, margins grow and deregulation boosts profits.

Wholesale rates this morning:

US	\$0.666
UK	£0.512
NZ	\$1.104
Euro	€0.615
Japan	¥100.33
Thailand	฿22.31
China	¥4.737
South Africa	11.725
Canada	\$0.920
Crude oil	US\$70.58

Mercure Nha Trang

ACCOR will introduce its midscale Mercure brand to the city of Nha Trang next year, with a new beachfront property signed.

Mercure Nha Trang is also Accor's ninth new property in Vietnam this year and will feature 124 rooms all with ocean views, an all-day restaurant, bar and lounge, fitness centre, day spa and flexible meeting spaces.

Wayfinder do it the British way



WAYFINDER Travel & Cruise, alongside Riviera Travel, recently hosted a British-themed afternoon tea in celebration of solo female travellers.

Hosted at The Newstead Residences, Brisbane, the event aimed to raise awareness of Riviera Travel's premium offerings in the Queensland market.

The 55 special guests in attendance savoured a menu capturing the essence of British tradition, while enjoying performances from string duo, Paradiso Strings.

A highlight of the event was an interview, conducted by Travel the World's Sharon Hando, with Sheila MacDonald, a 75-year-old medieval re-enactor and breast cancer survivor, who is also the first ambassador for Wayfinder Women, a new initiative launched by Wayfinder Travel.

The afternoon tea also raised \$1,400 from ticket sales for Aveo's 'Project Pink', an initiative that funds vital breast cancer research every Oct. *JM*

Pictured: Hando invites

MacDonald to share her story of strength, personal survival, and global adventure.

Epic opening date

UNIVERSAL Orlando will open the doors and welcome guests to its newest theme park - Epic Universe - from 22 May 2025.

The fourth theme park at the Universal Orlando Resort features five 'worlds' themed on the Wizarding World of Harry Potter, Super Nintendo, Isle of Berk, Dark Universe and the *How To Train Your Dragon* franchise.

Together, the park will offer more than 50 experiences ranging from exciting new themed rides to dining and shopping.

In a phased launch, tickets to Epic Universe go on sale as multi-day holiday packages with three to five days of park entry.

Hotel reservations at Universal Helios Grand Hotel for stays from 22 May 2025 are also open today, while a date to purchase single-day Epic Universe park entry tickets is yet to be revealed.

Bali overstayers rife

IMMIGRATION officers in Bali are continuing to hunt down tourists risking significant jail time by overstaying their visas.

Singaraja immigration office boss Hendra Setiawan told local media that Operation Jagratara found a person who'd overstayed by more than nine months and is now awaiting deportation.

New laws to combat and deter visa violators recently took effect in Bali (*TD* 08 Oct), with the most egregious cases facing 20 years in prison, along with lifetime bans.

Bali Regional Office of the Ministry of Law and Human Rights, Pramella Yunidar Pasaribu, said a zero-tolerance rule will be enforced for immigration offences.

"This monitoring is carried out to ensure that all foreigners in Bali comply with immigration regulations," Pasaribu said.

"We want to keep Bali safe and conducive for tourists and local residents," she added.

Museum now open

THE world's largest collection of artefacts from ancient Egypt is now on display at the new Grand Egyptian Museum, which is now in its soft opening phase.

Located near the Giza Pyramids, the museum features more than 100,000 objects, including mummified bodies, elaborately decorated sarcophagi and more.

When the new attraction is fully open, an extensive display of King Tutankhamun will be among the exhibits for guests.

The Grand Egyptian Museum was originally due to open in 2012 but was repeatedly delayed due to cost blowouts, political turmoil and the COVID pandemic.



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