

## Today's issue of TD

*Travel Daily* today features six pages of the latest travel industry news including our **Luxury page** plus a full page from **Silversea**.

## Lehmo makes return

**COMEDIAN** Anthony 'Lehmo' Lehmann will return as emcee for the 2024 National Travel Industry Awards (NTIA).

The Australian Travel Industry Association (ATIA) said that Lehmo is known for his sharp wit, engaging humour and ability to bring a room to life, adding his return is sure to elevate the night's festivities to new heights.

Meanwhile, ATIA has confirmed Helloworld Travel Limited as the sponsor of the entertainment during travel's night of nights.

## Barry returns to ATIA

**ONE** of the industry's most recognisable faces is back on the board of the Australian Travel Industry Association (ATIA), with Webjet's Katrina Barry (**pictured**) replacing her colleague Shelley Beasley (**TD** breaking news).

The transition follows recent changes at Webjet, which has seen Barry formally appointed CEO of Webjet B2C and Beasley become the COO of Web Travel Group (which retains WebBeds) as part of a successful demerger shareholder vote (**TD** 17 Sep).

Being a director of a peak travel industry body is not new territory for Barry, having previously served on the board of ATIA (then AFTA) until Mar 2022.

She brings with her more 15 years of experience as a non-executive director across the tourism, fintech, and financial services sectors, with ATIA indicating Barry's extensive experience and deep understanding of the travel industry will be invaluable to the association as it continues to advocate for members.

Reflecting upon her time at ATIA, outgoing Director Beasley said it had been an "incredible honour" to serve on the board. "Joining in the midst of COVID allowed me to truly appreciate the creativity, resilience, and commitment that exists within this industry, and I am filled with pride when reflecting on the way we came together to support



each other," she said.

"I want to express my deepest gratitude to Tom Manwaring for his exceptional leadership as Chair, a role he held for the majority of my time on the board.

"His leadership and dedication were critical in delivering the positive outcomes that ATIA was able to achieve during these tough times," Beasley added.

ATIA Chair Christian Hunter said Beasley's contributions during the acute challenges of the pandemic were "instrumental" in guiding the association through the turbulence of the last four years.

Hunter also said the board was delighted to welcome Barry back.

"Katrina's extensive experience and leadership within the travel and tourism sector will be a tremendous asset to our association as we continue to navigate the complexities of the industry," Hunter said.

Barry added that she is looking forward to once again contributing to ATIA during a "pivotal time" for the industry. *AB*

## Silversea savings

**SILVERSEA** is offering limited-time family savings of \$5,000 for the first two guests, and fares from \$250 per guest, per day, for the third and fourth passengers - see **page seven** for more info.

## Tripadvisor backflips

**TRIPADVISOR** has confirmed plans to discontinue direct booking and management of vacation rentals on its platform from 01 Nov, citing a new strategy to leverage third party providers.

"This strategic shift aligns vacation rentals with our existing hotels offering and ensures the best experience for our customers," Tripadvisor said.

The move follows the company scrapping its Plus subscription program in Mar (**TD** 11 Mar).

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## Aussies spend \$3.5b

AUSTRALIAN travellers injected \$3.5 billion of tourism spend into New Zealand's economy during the months of Jun and Jul.

TNZ data also showed that Australia remained the country's biggest spend market, ahead of the United States (\$1.7 billion).

## Rome2Rio hires new chief

AUSTRALIA-BASED trip planning platform Rome2Rio has appointed former Expedia executive Wendy Olson Killion (pictured) to be its new CEO.

The company, which has global growth ambitions and is headquartered in Melbourne, said Olson Killion is well-positioned to lead "a new era", and will help complete its vision of becoming the world's most trusted travel planning tool.

In her previous role at Expedia, Olson Killion was responsible for leading product, strategy, operations, marketing, and commercial partner-facing teams.

Olson Killion has also operated her own consultancy firm and served on several industry boards, including the VisitBritain Tourism Advisory Council.

Speaking about her new role as chief of Rome2Rio, Olson Killion said it is an "exciting global brand with a powerful platform that has revolutionised the way travellers



discover and plan their journeys worldwide".

"My focus will be on expanding and monetising the powerful search capacity of Rome2Rio, while further increasing its relevance with travellers and advertising partners worldwide," the new recruit added.

Yesh Munnangi departs the business after more than four years at CEO, in that time overseeing its acquisition by German parent Omio, navigating the pandemic without losing any employees, and in more recent years, doubling the size of the Australian team.

Rome2Rio gathers data from 12,000 transport operators across 240 countries to provide multimodal transport itineraries.

## HX's b'day season

HX HAS unveiled its 2026-2027 season, which includes a range of new itineraries in Antarctica, Alaska, Greenland, Norway, and the Galapagos Islands.

The expedition cruise brand also celebrate its 130th b'day during the season - more details in **CW**.

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## Redefining business travel

EXCLUSIVE

**CORPORATE** travel management specialist Travel Beyond Group has introduced TB Connect to the market, hailed by the company as a tool that will “redefine how businesses manage travel programs”.

With a focus on efficiency, security, and sustainability, Travel Beyond Group said TB Connect is an all-in-one platform that brings together a suite of key features, including online booking tool integration, seamless updating of traveller profiles, streamlining of pre-trip requirements, as well as a range of safeguards to keep employees safe on trips.

TB Connect also simplifies trip planning by managing visas, entry



requirements, and vaccinations, while travel managers can also access intelligent data insights & have better oversight regarding unused tickets and credits.

The tool also allows the carbon footprint of business trips to be thoroughly tracked via reports.

“Through TB Connect, our clients can access a powerful tool that not only enhances the travel experience but also supports their broader business objectives,” CEO Tim Lane said.

### QR boosts Holland

**QATAR** Airways will boost services to Amsterdam from 10 weekly flights to 14 on a seasonal basis between 12 Nov & 29 Mar.

The decision will inject an additional 40,000 seats between Amsterdam and Doha, and follows rival Middle Eastern carrier Etihad boosting its summer schedule to a number of European ports (**TD 17 Sep**).

“Qatar Airways is delighted to witness and serve the growing travel demand in the Dutch capital, which is an integral destination in our European network,” Chief Commercial Officer Thierry Antinori said.

### Tokyo is on board

**THE** Council of Australian Tour Operators (CATO) has announced Tokyo Tourism will be the gold and entertainment sponsor for the 2024 CATO Christmas Lunch taking place on 05 Dec.

“Their incredible support will help us bring even more fun and entertainment to this highly anticipated event, making it an unforgettable experience for all guests,” CATO enthused.

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## All I want for Xmas is a holiday



**AUSSIES** are eager to splurge on travel this upcoming holiday season, according to American Express, which has just published a new *Amex Trendex* report showing that consumers are planning to spend 38% more on travel compared to last year.

The global index also found that visiting family and ‘me-cations’ are now top travel priorities among Australians for the upcoming holidays.

Around seven in 10 (68%) adults travelling this holiday season are doing so to visit family, while over half (59%) are travelling to focus on themselves, with this number rising to 60% among Gen Z and 67% among Millennials.

Additionally, the index found that the majority of Aussies (74%) would rather share a fun experience or trip with friends than exchange gifts.

“With less than 100 days until Christmas, Australians are embracing the spirit of giving this holiday season and prioritising meaningful moments,” said Corinne Ng, Vice President and General Manager of Travel and

Lifestyle Services, American Express APAC.

“That could be gifting themselves time away, travelling to visit family, hosting events with friends and family, or taking the time to find a sentimental gift.”

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### Brits are eyeing Oz

**A NEW** report from Taboola shows Australia has topped the list of desired destinations this summer for British travellers.

Article views in the UK related to Sydney alone have increased by 35% over the last 45 days, beating out the Caribbean.



## Wilckens parks role

**THE** Caravan Industry Association of Australia has a new Chair after long-standing incumbent Grant Wilckens stepped down from the position.

Taking over from Wilckens, who has been Chair for around seven years, is Experience Holiday Parks Exec Director, Donna Cocking.

“While there may be challenges ahead, the love for great Aussie caravan and camping holidays is as strong as ever,” Wilckens said upon his exit this week.

“I know the industry will continue to grow and innovate to deliver exceptional tourism experiences,” he added.

Wilckens is also the Chief Executive Officer of the mixed-use accommodation park network G'day Group, and will remain in that position.

## Ricciardo drives WA dream



**TOURISM** Western Australia has recruited WA-born Formula 1 driver Daniel Ricciardo once again for the second iteration of its ‘Drive the Dream’ campaign (**TD** 29 Sep 2023).

Launched yesterday in Australia and Singapore ahead of the F1 Grand Prix this weekend, the road trip-focused marketing push will later be rolled out across other key international markets over the next 12 months.

The highlight of the campaign is a cinematic short film featuring

Ricciardo and his best mate Blake on their road trip, this time from Perth/Boorloo through the Margaret River region and beyond, along the South West Nature and Wine Drive.

Tourism WA is collaborating with major domestic and international partners, including Skyscanner, Qantas Hotels and Holidays within interstate markets and C-Trip in China, to drive bookings through the campaign.

**CLICK HERE** to watch Daniel and Blake hit the road. *JM*

## CLIENT SUCCESS MANAGERS (CORPORATE ACCOUNT MANAGERS) PERTH AND SYDNEY

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If you have any questions or would like a copy of the position description, please reach out as we're always up for a chat.



## Window Seat

**TWO** friends in the UK have taken the idea of “getting back to nature” a step further on their six-day tandem bike ride to take in the sights of southwest England.

Neil Cox, 36, and his friend J Antic, 25, set off recently on a naked 418km journey from Gloucester to Land's End, Cornwall, adding a whole new meaning to the phrase “travelling light”.

The naturists, who have spent some nights camping and others in hotels or B&Bs, said the response from the public so far has either been positive or indifferent.

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### Hotel disloyalty

A **UNION** representing workers in the hotel industry has launched a website highlighting how Hilton, Marriott International and Hyatt have steadily devalued their loyalty and rewards programs over several years.

HotelDisloyalty.org highlights how loyalty members' points balances in Hilton Honors, Marriott Bonvoy and World of Hyatt programs may no longer be sufficient for upgrades.

The union says the brands devalued their points values by up to 33% between 2019 and 2023 and failed to notify members, while also slashing credit card rewards perks.

The US Department of Transportation has raised the prospect of regulating rewards programs, last week launching an investigation (**TD 13 Sep**) into four airline schemes it believes may be devaluing points and making reward redemption harder.

Marriott declined to comment on the creation of the site, while Hilton did not respond by today's deadline.



## SILVER NOVA TO GET A TASTE OF AUSTRALIA

**SILVERSEA** will introduce its culinary program, SALT (Sea and Land Taste), to Australia and New Zealand for the first time when *Silver Nova* (**pictured**) makes her debut later this year (**TD 11 Jun**).

Scheduled to arrive in Australian waters on 18 Nov, the Nova-class ship will offer seven Australian and New Zealand sailings ranging from 16-18 days, before returning to Asia in Feb.

*Silver Nova's* inaugural season in Asia-Pacific will also mark the launch of the line's SALT program in the region, offering a range of exclusive new destination-inspired culinary experiences both on board and ashore.

Highlights include a seasonal



foraging tour through the Adelaide Botanic Gardens with Chef Tom Tilbury, and a guided wine experience and lunch in New Zealand's Hawke's Bay.

"We're excited to be bringing SALT to Asia-Pacific in 2024, including Australia and New Zealand for the first time,"

commented Silversea President, Bert Hernandez.

"SALT is all about discovering the soul of a place through its food and culture - and where better to taste and explore than these countries so rich in heritage and celebrated for their diverse cuisines?" *JM*

### LTC adds new product coordinator to the team

**THE** Luxury Travel Collection (LTC) has welcomed Karen Anderson (**pictured**) as its new Luxury Product Coordinator.

She brings 18 years of travel industry experience to the position, having worked in roles across the wholesale, leisure and corporate sectors.

Prior to joining LTC, Anderson filled the role of Market Manager at Flight Centre Travel Group, with her CV also including a stint at BCD Travel.

"I want to emphasise the value of travel beyond just the destination as I believe travelling can be a transformative and enriching



experience," Anderson said.

The Gold Coast-based travel professional is passionate about creating exceptional travel experiences and helping to ensure that guests' journeys are memorable and enjoyable.

### Regent is starstruck

**GUESTS** sailing with Regent Seven Sea Cruises (RSSC) can now enjoy unlimited high-speed wi-fi, with the ultra-luxury cruise line having now installed SpaceX's Starlink on all six ships in its fleet.

Using advanced low earth orbit satellites, Starlink is set to improve the capacity, speed, and reliability of on-board internet.

RSSC President Andrea DeMarco said the Starlink installation will improve guests' ability to communicate with loved ones at home, as well as support the ship's operational needs.

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## ACCOMMODATION

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The Ritz-Carlton has made its debut in Morocco with the opening of a new property in the country's capital. Described as an opulent palace, the **Ritz-Carlton Rabat, Dar Es Salam** is set along 440 hectares of forest and lush gardens. The new property features 100 guestrooms and 17 suites, all with a private terraces facing the pool and the gardens, including a 180m<sup>2</sup> Royal Suite. There is also a spa with saunas, massage rooms and two couple's suites.



**InterContinental Wellington** has unveiled its freshly renovated Health Club, which now features a spacious new layout, modernised design, and the addition of an infrared sauna and ice bath plunge pool. The indoor heated swimming pool has been retiled with handmade Italian mosaic tiles, and is surrounded by new loungers and plush towels. The property has also restyled its 79 Classic Rooms with all-new soft furnishings and upgraded bathrooms.



Boasting the charm of a 1920s speakeasy, **Amora Hotel Jamison Sydney's** recently launched Brooksy Bar offers intimate, themed bar experiences. Featuring Italian marble, a statement metal light feature, rich velvet banquettes and French oak flooring, patrons of the new venue can indulge in lavish cocktails, roving whisky trolleys, and tableside entertainment such as fortune telling. Brooksy Bar also serves up a program of regular spirit tastings.



Red Roof has announced the opening of its 700th property, the 86-room **Red Roof PLUS+ Jamaica** in New York, which is conveniently located around 6km from JFK International Airport. The family friendly, pet friendly hotel offers free wi-fi, a business centre, free continental breakfast, free coffee in the lobby, a fitness facility, free parking and paid guest laundry facilities.



**Novotel Nara** is the latest addition to the Accor Group in Japan, comprising 264 rooms that blend European and Japanese aesthetics. Guests staying at the new build will enjoy easy access to Nara's UNESCO World Heritage sites like Todai-ji Temple. Novotel Nara prioritises eco-friendly practices, with a focus on reducing plastic and carbon footprints, and promoting ocean conservation.

## Ponant sails into town



**PONANT** has announced its new Australian roadshow series, dubbed 'You are the destination', which will travel across NSW, Victoria and Queensland from 22 Oct to Nov 19.

Trade partners and their clients are invited to join the events to learn about the luxury expedition cruise line's new and upcoming experiences, and take advantage of exclusive offers and surprises on the day.

The events will feature special guest Jorge Villamarin, Expedition Operations Manager Asia Pacific, renowned for delivering experiences in some of the world's most remote and stunning locations.

Ponant's roadshow series will commence in Melbourne with two sessions on 22 Oct, followed by one session in the Mornington Peninsula the next day.

The roadshow will then head to Sydney on 11 Nov, before wrapping up in Brisbane on 19 Nov, with two sessions scheduled for the Queensland capital.

Agents can register online **HERE**, and register their clients by sharing **THIS** link and advising them to add you as their preferred travel agent on the registration form.

Travel partners are also encouraged to share Ponant's social media assets to their network - **CLICK HERE** to download them. *JM*

## VV wants influence

**VIRGIN** Voyages has inked a deal with social media influencer platform Jerne to enhance its brand reputation with potential customers in 202 countries.

The deal will see the cruise line access and invite a wide range of social media gurus with large audiences onto its ships, forming a key part of its marketing plan.

"We are no stranger to leading the industry in sales and marketing innovation, particularly for new-to-cruise travellers who are looking for a different experience at sea," VV said.

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