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## Addressing the shortage

TAFE NSW has partnered with Destination NSW to develop training programs in a bid to address workforce shortages plaguing the tourism sector.

Jointly funded by the Federal Government's 'NSW Choose Tourism Program', the subsidised courses will encourage more Australians to pursue a career in the visitor economy, helping under-pressure operators to attract, retain and upskill staff.

The three new training programs include an 'Introduction to the Visitor Economy' course, which provides foundational knowledge and explores careers in the tourism industry.

It will be offered free for the first six weeks, with fully subsidised access available for NSW high school students.

Also on offer are five one-hour video masterclasses which are accessible on the TAFE NSW website, featuring industry experts such as Scenic

World, Cupitt's Estate, Merlin Entertainment, Sydney Opera House, and W Hotels.

The third new training program is the Modernised Certificate III in Tourism launching in 2025.

Updated qualifications will include new visitor economy skills using contemporary case studies and assessments based on industry feedback.

The new courses follow a key recommendation set to be included in the soon-to-be-released Visitor Economy Strategy 2030 Review, which states more need to be done to create incentives for school-leavers to take up a job in tourism. *AB*

### Today's issue of TD

*Travel Daily* today has six pages, including our **Business Events News** feature, plus a Product Profile from **Destination Webinars** & a full page from **Disney Destinations**.

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## New podcast eps

**DESTINATION** Webinars is rolling out new episodes of its podcast aimed especially to help travel agents stay ahead of the training curve.

Season one is available to listen now in full, featuring ten episodes packed with handy tips - see [page eight](#) for more details.



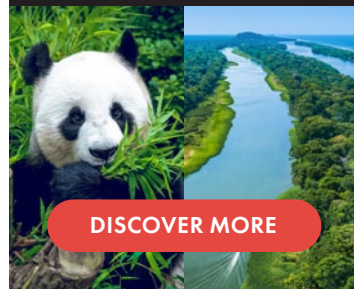
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## Sealink taps India

SEALINK Marine & Tourism has appointed Connect2India as its new trade distribution representative for India.

Based in Mumbai the Aussie agency, which is part of the Gaibo Agency group, will be Sealink's in-market sales representative for the rapidly growing market, where it look to take advantage of India's burgeoning middle class to book trips to Australia.

"Connect2India's strong relationships with key Indian travel trade partners...make them the perfect partner to help us expand our presence in this key market," SeaLink General Manager for Global Sales and Distribution, Richard Doyle, said.

The Connect2India team in India will be led by experienced Sales Manager Kajal Somalya.

## Intrepid shouts with Leigh

INTREPID Travel has appointed Leigh Reynolds as its Senior Key Partnerships Manager for Australia and New Zealand (ANZ). The new title represents a promotion from his previous role of Partnership Growth Manager, a position he held since 2019.

Reynolds will now oversee key partnerships across the ANZ region, including working closely with industry stakeholders to drive growth and lead purpose-led travel experiences.

"I'm thrilled to take on this expanded role with a company that is not only committed to adventure travel but also to making a positive impact on the world," Reynolds gushed.

"I look forward to further strengthening relationships and working with our incredible partners to promote responsible tourism," he added.

Intrepid's Head of Partnerships ANZ Megan Lowe observed that Reynolds "lives and breathes" the company's values.

"He brings both passion and



deep understanding of travel, and he is loved by everyone he works with," Lowe said.

"We're excited to see him step into this new role, where his experience and dedication will undoubtedly continue to drive success for our business and our partners," she added. AB

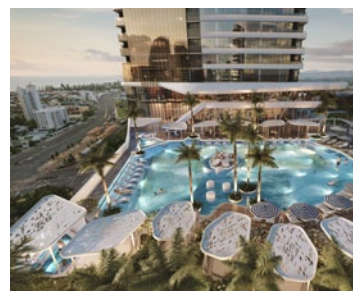
## Andaz on the GC

HYATT Hotels has entered into an agreement with Destination Gold Coast to open an Andaz resort on the Gold Coast from the middle of next year.

Andaz Gold Coast will be located at The Star Gold Coast, occupying floors six to 21 of the 65-storey second tower, and will also offer guests 202 rooms and suites, a fitness centre, as well as three food and beverage outlets.

Hyatt had previously flagged plans to bring its Andaz brand to Australia in 2019 (TD 18 Mar 2019), however the opportunity to bring a property to Sydney in 2022 was scuttled by the challenges of the pandemic.

The Andaz brand caters to travellers seeking modern, upscale accommodation with a local and cultural infusion.



## Qantas strike action

QANTAS does not expect its services to and from Melbourne to be affected today, despite 1,100 engineers walking off the job today over pay conditions.

"We're putting contingencies in place," the carrier said, adding the staff taking part in this round of industrial action are part of its Aircraft Maintenance Engineers teams, making up less than half of total engineering team.

However, Melbourne is not the only industrial flashpoint, with workers threatening to down tools at hubs across the country on 30 Sep, 02 Oct, and 04 Oct.

In response, Qantas said it was confident of reaching an agreement, stating it had "made progress on a number of items", including around pay rises and lifestyle benefits for its staff.

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## CVFR starts the party

CVFR Travel Group has been named as the official sponsor of the National Travel Industry Awards' (NTIA) afterparty.

The announcement demonstrates CVFR Travel Group's commitment to being a key supporter of NTIA 2024, adding to existing sponsorships across several key categories.

NTIA's afterparty promises to be a vibrant conclusion to the celebratory night, providing an opportunity for networking and celebration amongst the industry's top performers.

"We are proud to support this prestigious event that recognises the best in Australian travel, and we can't wait to celebrate with the industry's finest on what promises to be an incredible night," CVFR Group CEO Ram Chhabra said.

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## Quark goes on tour

**AGENTS** in Brisbane and Sydney can learn more about the Quark Expeditions experience at a pair of events scheduled for late Oct.

Tickets are now available to the company's event in Brisbane, held on 22 Oct at Customs House Brisbane - [CLICK HERE](#) to book, with Sydney set for 24 Oct at the Australian Museum - [CLICK HERE](#).

The company will showcase its upcoming solar eclipse, helicopter and Iceland itineraries, along with what travellers can expect on a Quark polar expeditions.

Flying in for the events to meet with agents will be Quark Senior Director of Global Partnerships, Beth Mercier; Director of Trade Marketing, Seb Canape, and Expedition Guide, Ian Johnson, who will share first-person stories from cruise expeditions.

## HLO Rowville's new chapter



**HELLOWORLD** Travel Rowville has new owners, with Amy Muratovic and Rebecca Shady taking over from industry stalwarts Kath and John Williams.

Muratovic and Shady (**pictured** with the team) are both well-established travel professionals, and recently spoke of their excitement for the new chapter ahead managing the popular Victorian store.

"As a team, we are beyond thrilled to take the reins of this successful business that's been a part of the local community for 32 years," the duo enthused.

"Between us, we have over 38 years of experience in the travel industry and we specialise in all aspects of travel from cruising to safaris and everything in between.

"Together, we want to take

this business to a new level, and we can't wait to do this with our amazing team and deliver wonderful experiences for our clients, both existing and new."

Reflecting on their decades spent at the helm of the Rowville location and transition to retirement, Kath & John Williams said they had plenty of fond memories to take with them.

"As we step into retirement after 32 remarkable years, we find ourselves reflecting on the friendships we've forged.

"Through challenges, triumphs, and shared laughter, you've become more than colleagues."

Helloworld's Head of Branded and Associate Networks, Nick Sutherland, said it is great to keep stores in the Helloworld family and to foster succession planning and a smooth transition. **AB**

## Atlantis Down Under

**AUSTRALIAN** agency Enthral has been appointed to represent the ultra-luxury Atlantis, The Palm and Atlantis The Royal located in the UAE leisure hub of Dubai.

The win followed a competitive four-way pitch and will see Enthral lead public relations and influencer strategy in Australia, the latter of which will include celebrity, content creator and brand deal for the two resorts.

Eighties icon Lionel Richie will ring in the New Year at Atlantis, The Palm with a celebratory concert - see more details [HERE](#).



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## TIME graduates climb high



**JOURNEY** Beyond recently took the Travel Industry Mentor Experience (TIME) to new heights as it hosted the organisation's first graduation outside Sydney.

Instead, the ceremony took place on level 64 of Melbourne's Eureka Tower, providing a glittering platform for three graduates - Emma Donovan, Sara Doyle and Liz Eastaugh - to receive their stripes.

In front of a crowd of more than 50, the three graduates shared their TIME experience, career stories and goals for the future.

The event also featured a panel discussion starring Journey Beyond GM Attractions & Dining, Cesar Piotto; Evolution Travel Collective CEO & Founder, Pete Rawley, and Cornerstone People Solutions Director, Cassandra Tormey, which was moderated by TIME graduate, Hannah Taylor.

The event was organised by TIME Vic state representative,

## Princess eclipses

**PRINCESS** Cruises has added a second 'Total Solar Eclipse' cruise option aboard its newest ship, *Sun Princess*, when the celestial event next takes place in 2026.

The line has adapted the itinerary of the *Sun Princess* voyage departing Barcelona on 08 Aug 2026 to position the ship off the coast of Spain on 12 Aug, where pax can see the two mins and 18 secs of the total eclipse.

Ingrid Berthelsen, herself a former TIME mentor and mentee.

"It was so exciting to hold the first ever interstate Graduation for TIME here in Melbourne."

"We are grateful for the support of not just the industry here in Melbourne who attended but also the support of the TIME Board who helped us make this happen," Berthelsen said. *ML*

**Pictured** are the latest round of TIME graduates in Melbourne: Emma Donovan, Sara Doyle and Liz Eastaugh.

## Antarctica shooting

**AURORA** Expeditions will welcome budding photographers on a specially themed voyage to Antarctica in Feb 2026, which will feature several acclaimed wildlife and landscape professionals.

The 12-day 'Antarctic Explorer: Through the Lens' itinerary will allow photo enthusiasts a chance to learn from masters including Nigel Danson, Rachel Bigsby, Mads Peter Iverson, Scott Portelli, James Popsys and many more.

Experts will share personalised guidance on camera set-up and composition through onshore photo tours and onboard presentations and workshops.



## Discover our Adventure Special Report

Click here

## LuxList awards debut

**LUXURY** Escapes has unveiled its inaugural travel awards, The LuxList, which has been created to honour the best of the best in luxury travel as judged by Australian consumers.

From 20 Sep to 07 Oct, Luxury Escapes will survey its members to find out their favourite destinations across categories such as family, all-inclusive, cruise trips, and bucket-list experiences.

Those who vote will be in the running to win a grand prize.

The winner for each category will be announced on 08 Oct and awarded a Luxury Escapes LuxList award winner badge.

Find out more details about The LuxList awards **HERE**.

## Uniworld is on theme

**UNIWORLD** Boutique River Cruises has announced its latest range of themed cruises for 2025 across music, golf package, as well as the brand's first women's-only voyage.

Fresh offerings include the 'Music of the Danube' sailing on 03 Aug and 02 Nov, where guests will be treated to an array of musical experiences, including a yodelling workshop, a *Sound of Music* tour in Salzburg, an organ concert, and more.

Uniworld will also offer an all-inclusive 'Premium Golf Package' as an add-on to the 'Brilliant Bordeaux' itinerary, which includes 18-hole rounds at Cabot Bordeaux and St. Emilion, a shared caddy service and gourmet dining, and more.

Meanwhile, the new women's-only cruise will set sail on 24 Aug on the 'Burgundy and Provence' itinerary, with excursions such as truffle hunting, onboard workshops led by local artisans, burlesque sessions, and a bike ride to the Chartreuse.

Guests can also enjoy returning favourites in 2025, such as the 'Generations Collection', the 'Out on the Rivers' series, and the 'Jewish Heritage Sailings'.



## Window Seat

**JAPAN'S** rice shortage is being exacerbated by the strong surge in tourists to the country in recent months.

Yes, sushi-craving visitors have not helped the scarcity of the local staple, which was already under pressure due to bad weather hampering the supply chain.

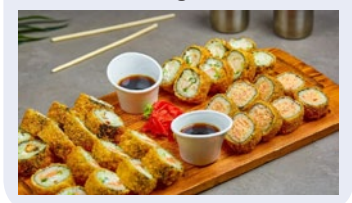
The popular Asian tourist destination said its private reserve of rice stood at just 1.56 million tonnes, marking the lowest volume in years, according to data from Japan's Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries.

On top of Japan preparing for future natural disasters, the government department said the increase in table rice demand due to the influx of tourists was driving up food service demand.

Before we blame ourselves for Japan's plight, it should also be noted the country imposes a whopping 778% tariff on imported rice in order to protect its rice farmers, which is also clearly playing a major role in the diminishing rice stocks.

While the country has previously made commitments to import a minimum of 682,000 tonnes of rice a year under obligations to the World Trade Organization, local media suggests the rice is largely isolated from Japanese consumers and used primarily as agricultural feed.

With all of this said, Aussie travellers should not be surprised if their sushi budgets aren't stretching as far.





## VINYL GROUP MAKES FUNKY ACQUISITION

VINYL Group, Australia's only ASX-listed music company, has announced its acquisition of Funkified Entertainment, an end-to-end events and brand activations business.

The \$2.5 million purchase will see Vinyl Group acquire 100% of the issued capital in Funkified Entertainment, a Sydney-based agency specialising in providing entertainment for corporate events, weddings and parties.

Since 2021, Funkified has acted as the in-house events arm for Vinyl Group's premium youth publisher, The Brag Media, which produces titles like *Rolling Stone* (AU/NZ) and *Variety Australia*.

Funkified Entertainment also white-labels as the events and activation team for some of the biggest agencies and brands across Australia, and has delivered more than 1,000



campaigns, tours, builds and events across the country over the last 15 years.

For the 2024 financial year, Funkified achieved unaudited revenues amounting to \$4.03 million and an EBITDA of \$430k, with Vinyl Group expecting these numbers will immediately grow once the business is integrated

under The Brag Media operation.

Josh Simons, Vinyl Group CEO, said the acquisition will fast-track the company's "path to profitability", enabling it to improve group company margins, revenue and driving growth.

Funkified Founder and Chief Executive Officer, Gus Stephenson, will continue to lead

the business under a full-time employment agreement with Vinyl Group.

"Following several years of working closely with the incredible team at The Brag Media and Vinyl Group, creating some of the country's largest and most innovative events and activations, it is an exciting step in our 15-year history to officially join Vinyl Group," Stephenson commented.

"We look forward to bringing our expertise and accelerating the growth and profitability of events and activations across the wider organisation."

The acquisition is expected to be completed by 31 Dec, with Vinyl Group to pay \$1.8 million in cash and \$200k in shares, with a further \$500k cash to be deposited into an escrow account as security for 12 months. *JM*

### Book Geelong

**BOOKINGS** are now open for the new Nyaal Banyul Geelong Convention and Event Centre, with availability starting in 2026 (**TD** 08 Feb).

Located an hour from Melbourne, the waterfront venue will feature a 1,000-seat theatre, 2,000m<sup>2</sup> exhibition space, and flexible meeting rooms.

Thirty-eight percent of the centre's energy will be self-generated - learn more **HERE**.

### ABEA reveals keynote speakers for inaugural conference

**THE** Australian Business Events Association (ABEA) has revealed the speaker line-up for its inaugural conference taking place 10-11 Dec at ICC Sydney.

Under the theme 'Focused on the future', the event aims to provide insights, strategies and opportunities for the industry to hear new ideas, share news and updates, and network.

Mark McCrindle, a globally recognised social researcher and demographer, best-selling

author and TEDx speaker, will take the stage for the keynote address, alongside Michael McQueen, an award-winning speaker, change strategist, and best-selling author.

Rosie Yeo, an esteemed strategist and author of *Go For Bold: How to Create Powerful Strategy in Uncertain Times*, will act as the MC for the event.

"The ABEA Conference will work to enhance and secure the role of business events as a vital

economic pillar for Australia," said ABEA CEO, Melissa Brown.

"As the business events industry navigates rapid changes and unprecedented challenges, this year's conference theme aims to offer insights and strategies to ensure we are all best placed to face the future successfully."

Earlybird tickets to the ABEA National Conference and Awards 2024 are available now - find out more **HERE**. *JM*



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## APPOINTMENTS

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[appointments@traveldaily.com.au](mailto:appointments@traveldaily.com.au)

**Oneworld** has named **Loren Neuenschwander** as the Vice President Memberships, as part of a streamlining of its leadership structure. Neuenschwander is a seasoned aviation leader with more than 30 years of international aviation experience, at Delta Air Lines, and with Boston Consulting Group. Her appointment is part of a broader organisational change at oneworld, aimed at streamlining key areas of responsibility and enhancing operational efficiency, which will include the realignment of existing roles to better support the alliance's strategic priorities and member airlines.

**San Francisco Travel** has appointed **Anna Marie Presutti** as President & Chief Executive Officer. She has been serving in the roles on an interim basis since May, with the destination marketing organisation now confirming the move as permanent. Presutti is SF Travel's first female CEO in the DMO's 115-year history.

**Cordis, Auckland** has welcomed new leadership, with **Sunny Goo** and **Jacques Meyer** appointed as Hotel Manager and Director of Sales & Marketing respectively. Goo becomes the first-ever female Hotel Manager at Cordis Auckland, bringing with her almost 20 years of experience in the hotel industry. Meanwhile, Meyer has acquired his extensive commercial experience with brands such as Hilton, IHG, and Southern Sun, working across the world, in both Europe and Africa.

Capstone Hotel Management has appointed a General Manager at **Taipa Beach Resort, Andrew Adams-Smith**. The experienced hotelier arrives at the 32-room beachfront property, having worked previously in New Zealand, Australia, and the United States.

**Josh Thorpe** is starting a new position as Queensland Regional Sales Manager at **Inspiresport Australia**. Thorpe, a long-time Flight Centre Travel Group staffer, will now turn his attention to the Australian youth sports touring market. Thorpe will commence his new role after the current school holidays.

**BCD Meetings & Events** has announced the appointment of **Minte Wei** as Associate Director of Supplier Relations for Asia Pacific. She will be responsible for implementing the company's supplier relations strategy in the region, and enhancing engagement across all aspects of the business, including its partner network. Wei will report in to Senior Vice President of Global Supplier Relations & Partner Network, Christine Erickson.

**Nazaret Carbonari** has been appointed General Manager at **Waldorf Astoria Cancun**. The Argentina native brings more than 20 years of experience in the hospitality industry to the property, having worked across four different continents with brands such as Sheraton Hotels & Resorts, The Luxury Collection, Four Seasons Hotels & Resorts, Westin Hotels & Resorts, W Hotels, and Canopy by Hilton.



## Discover our River Cruise Special Report

[Click here](#)

## A TV journey through Europe



**THE** European Travel Commission (ETC), made up of five European national tourism organisations, has partnered with Proud Nomads Production Company to present a new travel TV series.

*Journey to Europe* will feature Austria, Ireland, Italy, Monaco and Switzerland over two episodes, showcasing lesser-known destinations and experiences across the five countries.

Hosted by David Whitehill, the series will take viewers off-the-beaten path, highlighting the rich history, culture and adventure of each country, with an emphasis on eco-friendly travel options.

"Europe as a destination has so much to offer year-round, and it was great to work with the ETC Brussels team and member countries here in Australia to inspire prospective Australian holidaymakers to come and experience these destinations for themselves," said Sofia Hansson, Chair of ETC's Australia Chapter.

"With multiple daily airline routes to Europe and so many authentic and immersive experiences to choose from, we

anticipate the demand for Europe to continue and look forward to welcoming Australian visitors to our destinations."

*Journey to Europe* will air on Channel 9 on 28 Sep and 05 Oct at 5pm, with both episodes available on 9Now for six months after their initial debut. *JM*

## Movenpick Jakarta

**MOVENPICK** Hotels & Resorts has opened its first property in Jakarta, strategically located close to the city's key landmarks, including Merdeka Presidential Palace, the National Monument, business districts, and the historic area of Kota Tua.

Featuring 265 rooms, the Movenpick Hotel Jakarta City Centre boasts a variety of culinary options, including several restaurants, a dessert bar, a cafe, a pool bar, and more.

The property also includes two contemporary ballrooms and 15 versatile meeting rooms, all equipped with interactive display TVs, digital displays, electronic whiteboards, and video conferencing capabilities.

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# TRAVEL AGENT

## Takeaways

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WEBINARS



## Tune into Travel Agent Takeaways: A Podcast for Busy Travel Agents

Travel Agent Takeaways is a new podcast designed to help travel agents stay informed on the go. Hosted by Charlie Trevena of Destination Webinars, each episode features a destination or supplier (or other industry legend), offering a quick, but valuable, training fix.

Season 1 has just wrapped up and in episode #1, Nathan McLoughlin discusses some of **Canada's** must-dos, as well as Canada's sustainable tourism strategy. In #2, Toni Fan shares insights on **Hong Kong's** top attractions, vibrant art scene, food scene and outdoor adventures.

In #3, Kylie Wapp details four of **ANZCRO's** curated self-drive itineraries through New Zealand's diverse landscapes. For #4, Anna Shannon joins

Charlie to discuss reasons why agents should become certified destination specialists to boost sales and opportunities. In #5, Brett Harvey discusses **Albatross Tours' 2025** Europe and UK tours, featuring longer stays and smaller groups.

In #6, Kim Vaughan shares **AmaWaterways' Celebration** of Wine cruises, which take travellers through Europe's top wine regions. In #7, Jacqui Tufala highlights what sets **Crystal** apart at sea, including their unique guest-to-space ratios. In #8, Julie King discusses **Dubai's** ever-evolving attractions, including luxury experiences and budget-friendly options. In #9, Jamie Van Jones introduces the new **Paspaley Pearl by Ponant**, and the benefits of small-scale expedition cruises.

In #10, Amanda Fenwick and Christine Poole offer tips on curating itineraries for **Western Australia's** stunning destinations. For episode #11, the Season Finale, Roslyn Ranse recounts her experience at Virtuoso Travel Week in Las Vegas.

### TUNE IN

Tune in to Season 1 via your favourite podcast channel or [online here](#).

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