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AC mini webinars

AGENTS are invited to log onto a series of 15-minute webinars designed as a refresher on the latest updates with Air Canada.

On every Thu from 08 May to 26 Jun, the weekly webinars will each run twice - at 8:30am and 11:30am - see **front page**.

Shorter/delayed US trips

US PRESIDENT Donald Trump's 'Liberation Day' tariff strategy has sent the Australian dollar tumbling below \$0.60 cents this week, a concerning trend that Australian Travel Industry Association (ATIA) CEO Dean Long concedes will impact travel to America in the short-term.

"A lowering of the Aussie dollar...means shorter trips to the United States, and in some instances, a decision to delay travel to one of our most important markets," Long told **Travel Daily**.

The ATIA chief tempered the grim prediction by reasoning that significant air capacity from Australia to the US would mitigate some of the impact, stating the strong seat numbers "should keep some downward pressure on airfares, which is always a strong demand generator."

On the inbound front, Long warned Australian international

tourism operators will likely struggle in the face of Trump's tariffs, who he pointed out are yet to recover to pre-COVID levels.

"While there is no direct impact for travel and tourism, tariffs will reduce the amount of money that Americans and those countries that apply reciprocal tariffs have, to spend on travel," he said.

For now, the movement of people has not been included in Trump's tariff plan. **AB**

The Star bailed again

AMERICAN gaming giant Bally's Corporation will spend \$300 on a multi-tranche convertible note and debt instrument in The Star Entertainment Group.

Bally's will pay \$100 million as part of an initial investment in The Star this week, with a further \$200 million coming following approval by shareholders.

The Star's Board is now recommending shareholders vote in favour of the unsecured stake.

Documentation will also now be prepared for review by the Foreign Investment Review Board and the Australian Securities and Investments Commission.


Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today features a cover wrap from **Air Canada**, eight pages of news, including a photo page from **Travel Managers** and our **Sustainability** page, a product profile from **Tourism Solomons**.

Solomons 'Kulture'

TOURISM Solomons is inviting agents to learn about some of the Solomon Islands' unique rituals and traditions in the latest product profile, out today.

Whether it is spear fighting, yarn harvesting or a shell money festival, read more on **page nine**.



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NCL ships chartered

NORWEGIAN Cruise Line will charter out *Norwegian Sky* and *Norwegian Sun* on a long-term lease to Indian cruise line Cordelia Cruises.

Norwegian Sky will exit the fleet on 30 Sep next year, with all booked passengers to receive a full refund and a 10% discount on a future cruise, while the transfer of *Norwegian Sun* will take place after its full published schedule concludes in Q4 2027.

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Cox & Kings to return

ABERCROMBIE & Kent Travel Group (AKTG) has unveiled plans to return the Cox & Kings brand to the Australian market (**TD** breaking news yesterday).

Under what it labelled “a carefully calibrated move”, AKTG said it will take the heritage escorted small-group tour brand beyond the United Kingdom to markets such as Australia and the



United States as part of a new global expansion push.

The return to the local market will be led by London-based Jennifer Charlton, who has been appointed MD of Cox & Kings, adding to her current responsibilities of Senior VP Sales and Business Development UK and EMEA of A&K.

AKTG purchased Cox & Kings in 2019 (**TD** 05 Dec 2019) after the brand’s former parent company ran into financial trouble.

Previously, the brand was offered to agents and travellers in Australia through the now defunct Tempo Holidays and Bentours wholesalers. **AB**

Hidden Indonesia

G ADVENTURES has launched 20 new trips to Indonesia’s lesser-known destinations, in an effort to combat overtourism in hotspots like Bali.

The fresh lineup includes a nine-day trip in Sulawesi, an island east of Borneo, where guests will meet the Torajan people.

Other offerings include a seven-day Borneo adventure in search of orangutans, and a seven-day journey through Sumatra island.

Azamara sales chief

AZAMARA Cruises has announced the appointment of David Siewers as its new Chief Sales Officer, effective 22 May.

Based in Miami, Siewers will oversee all markets outside of North America as the cruise line targets global growth.

Joining from Celebrity Cruises, Siewers led the company’s first-ever localised marketing program and helped rebuild sales momentum post-pandemic.

“David will guide us as we increase our global presence and performance through strategic alliances with agents and travellers alike in key international markets,” said Dondra Ritzenthaler, CEO of Azamara Cruises.

MEANWHILE, the line has also launched ‘Destination Immersion Elevated’, a new program featuring greater destination-focused offerings on board, including fresh culinary offerings, plus enhanced shore excursions.

SYD changes route

SYDNEY Airport is working on a new 20-year master plan which will feature a range of new infrastructure projects designed to make the airport more efficient.

In line with this, management has taken the decision to defer a number of upcoming transport and hotel infrastructure projects as part of a \$46 million write-off.

According to the airport’s 2024 accounts, shelved projects include a new public transport interchange and site provision for new hotels.

A new ground transport strategy is also due soon, incorporating its recently opened P1 car park.

The write-off comes from projects which had been started prior to the airport’s acquisition by a consortium of investors in 2022.

Sydney Airport’s draft 2045 *Master Plan* will be released for public consultation later this year, and is also expected to include a deeper detail on the hub’s revised property strategy.

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Europe at the top

SOUTHERN Europe has again taken out the most popular region for the month for Intrepid bookings measured by total transaction value in Mar, with SE Asia and northern Africa the next most popular markets.

By passenger numbers, Morocco and Vietnam were the top-selling destinations for the operator.

Intrepid's latest numbers also saw a skew towards customers aged over 51 years old, with couples making up 48% of those who booked, and solo guests still strong at 28% of bookings.

For those who called to ask questions, they were greeted by an average wait time of around two minutes - far better than the average call to a bank.

Intrepid Head of Partnerships ANZ, Megan Lowe, said, "This quarter also brought a busy season of events, expos, conferences and training", with the brand attending over 90 industry events.

Virgin adds more perks

VIRGIN Australia is going all out to push its new flights to Doha, announcing a US\$20 'Dine on Us' voucher for all Velocity members booking the new long-haul route, along with a raft of other perks.

Each Velocity member travelling on the new service who adds their loyalty membership number to their booking will receive a voucher that can be spent at a range of establishments at Doha Hamad International Airport, including Oreo Cafe, Gordon Ramsay Burger (**pictured**) and Harrods Tea Room, among others.

Velocity Frequent Flyer CEO, Nick Rohrlach, said, "The 'Dine on Us' initiative is about rewarding our Velocity members with an elevated travel experience.

"We're always looking for ways to give back to our members and [this promo] is just one of the many exclusive benefits they can enjoy on Virgin Australia's new international services to Doha."

Wellington carpark

WELLINGTON Airport opened a new carpark in its eastern precinct this week, providing over 800 new car spaces.

The lot was built on land bought in 2019 from a nearby golf club.

Klook agency team

TRAVEL experiences booking platform Klook has teamed up with four communications agencies to boost its brand-building efforts across Australia and New Zealand.

In addition to the continued engagement of its PR agency, The Lucid Agency (**TD** 07 Jun 2024), the travel platform will now work with Hatched media agency, The Attention Seeker social agency, and creative agency, Paper Moose.

First up on the to-do list for Klook's new 'Agency Village' is a new global brand campaign, which is set to launch in the coming months.



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Be **creative and original**, think beyond the ordinary. Inspire us with your storytelling and details, **make us feel the journey!**

Itinerary must be submitted no later than **COB 9 May 2025**.

Email your entry to: shummels@raileurope.com

Explora on the Med

EXPLORA Journeys has officially launched its Mediterranean Journeys Collection, with *EXPLORA II* setting sail on the inaugural departure from Barcelona over the weekend.

Until Nov, guests can sail through the western and eastern Mediterranean, visiting the coastlines of Italy, Greece, Turkiye, France, and beyond with extended stays, overnights, and flexible journey combinations of seven-, 14- and 21-night voyages.

Highlights of the new collection include a 14-night itinerary through the Aegean with stops in Mykonos and Istanbul on board *EXPLORA I*, and a seven-night escape visiting Ibiza and Portofino on board *EXPLORA II*.

Additionally, guests embarking on or disembarking from *EXPLORA II* in Barcelona will have the chance to experience the new MSC Barcelona Cruise Terminal, which was formally inaugurated last week.

EK expands savings

EMIRATES has expanded its 'My Emirates Pass' discount program for flyers to year-round, unlocking access to more than 600 exclusive offers to redeem throughout Dubai.

Previously only available during the Arabian summer, the pass allows travellers to use their physical boarding pass, or a phone screenshot, to access deals on dining, spa, shopping and experiences during their visit.

To avail participating deals in the program, travellers must show their boarding pass along with a photo ID with their name.

Qld Doubles the fun

EXPRESSIONS of interest are open for the tourism revival of Queensland's Double Island.

The destination is located three kilometres off Ellis Beach, with the Qld Govt now seeking an operator to revitalise the island as a premier tourism destination.

Room-Res rocks party hype



THE lucky agent who scored the last spot on the upcoming Room-Res Island Party in Thailand was announced last week during an event at The Room Residence, Room-Res' exclusive Sydney space for travel advisors.

Jen Ferry from Dreamweaver Travel beat 39 other travel sellers in a fierce battle of rock, paper, scissors to win an all-expenses paid trip to the luxurious Naka Island in Phuket, where she will join eight other agents in Aug.

As part of the campaign, advisors were offered plenty of incentives, including a 50% bonus Room-Res Rewards on every paid booking, \$50 milestone bonuses for 25 bookings, and instant tier

upgrades for bookings at selected Marriott properties.

"This was our most generous promotion ever - and we knew it deserved a finale to match," explained James Mooring, co-CEO of Room-Res.

"From incredible bookings to the sheer energy of the Room-Res Island Party, this campaign has shown what's possible when we focus on giving agents great tools and rewards.

"We couldn't be more excited to have Jen joining us for the experience of a lifetime in Phuket," Mooring added. *JHM*

Pictured: Ferry playing a heated game of rock, paper, scissors with other advisors.

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A Seine of things to come

EMERALD Cruises has confirmed a new multi-ship expansion that will see a trio of vessels join the fleet over the next two years.

Part of the growth plan for the Scenic Group brand includes a new purpose-built river ship on the Seine River, marking its debut on the iconic French waterway.

Emerald Lumi (render **pictured**) will set sail in 2027, pledging to bring a modern take on French river cruising to the market, boasting a combination of luxury amenities, cultural immersion, and a boutique feel on board.

Highlights on the round-trip Paris sailings include overnight and extended stays in marquee ports; French-inspired cuisine & wine pairings; land excursions developed in consort with locals; and regional storytelling presentations on board.

"It's a river rich in romance, history, and culinary heritage



- everything our guests love," said Glen Moroney, founder and Chairman of Scenic Group.

"We're excited to bring the distinctive Emerald Cruises experience to France with this beautifully designed ship."

Meanwhile, following the debut of *Emerald Kaia* in 2026, Emerald Cruises will introduce two more superyachts in 2026 and 2027.

Each ship will accommodate 128 guests and offer open-air spaces, wellness amenities, and immersive coastal explorations.

Emerald Raiya will debut in the Seychelles at the end of 2026, before repositioning to the Med in 2027, while *Emerald Xara* will launch in the Med in 2027, and then the Caribbean in late 2027.

ATIA UPDATE

from Dean Long, CEO



I AM sure, like most people, I didn't really know what to expect from President Trump's 'Liberation Day'. The fact that it has reduced the NASDAQ and S&P500 by \$6.6 trillion USD and the ASX by over \$100b shows that even the most conservative financial planner didn't see it coming.

For travel, this has meant several things. Firstly, as was confirmed to our members on 02 Apr, services and the movement of people have not been included in this round.

The focus of the tariffs appears to be on rebuilding America's manufacturing base and supporting farming electorates where international produce has typically dominated.

Secondly, while there is no direct impact for travel and tourism, tariffs will reduce the amount of money that Americans and those countries that apply reciprocal tariffs have to spend on travel - this will make it harder for

Australian international tourism operators who have yet to recover to pre-COVID levels.

For the travel industry, a lowering of the Aussie dollar to 59c means shorter trips to the US and in some instances, a decision to delay travel to one of our most important markets.

The good news is we still have significant air capacity to the United States, and this should keep some downward pressure on airfares, which is always a strong demand generator.

On the election front, we have seen over 80 members participate in the first week of the campaign.

There is still work to do so make sure you head over to the Hub and get involved.

To complement this tactical activity, we have been working very closely with 19 other major association partners, including the BCA and ACCI.

As detailed during our Election Hub launch, making sure we work with strong partners on economy-wide issues is critical.

We are proud to be part of this major campaign, so look out for the ATIA logos later this week.

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TravelManagers' 20th birthday tour

TRAVELMANAGERS spent Mar celebrating its 20th birthday with a succession of state meetings that brought together more than 160 personal travel managers (PTMs), along with several of its national partnership office (NPO) team and partner suppliers.

The merriment kicked off in Brisbane, before heading to Sydney, Adelaide, Perth, Melbourne and Hobart.

Each meeting was an opportunity for PTMs to catch up with friends and colleagues and hear the latest network updates, NPO and supplier news, all served with a generous slice of birthday cake and cheer.



PTMS Karen Whitehead and Hope Johnson with Vic Business Partnership Manager (BPM), Despina Madden.



FESTIVITIES in Adelaide.



CELEBRATING two decades of passion, partnership, and travel dreams come true in Melbourne.

QLD PTMs began the celebrations, acknowledging two decades of passion, partnership and success with TravelManagers.

QLD BPM Nicole Henderson with Fares and Ticketing Manager Jose Canas.



PTMS at the Perth state meeting sharing insights and experiences.



A MILESTONE anniversary to mark TravelManagers' Hobart state meeting.



ANOTHER day, another cake, this time for TravelManagers' NSW/ACT PTMs.



WA-BASED PTMs spent the day reminiscing, reconnecting, and looking ahead to the future.





Darwin is shining

THE 'Darwin Airports Resorts' collection of properties is shining brightly, topping the city's energy sustainability rating.

The collection - comprising Novotel Darwin Airport, Mercure Darwin Airport Resort, and Ibis Darwin Airport Hotel - were all top performers in the destination's sustainability ratings for the city's hotels.

The recent audited energy rating by the internationally recognised NABERS organisation awarded the Ibis a five-star rating, Mercure 4.5 stars, and Novotel four stars.

"The sustainability initiatives were a win-win for the environment and our business, without compromising the comfort of our guests," Darwin Airport Resorts General Manager Chris Chaffe said.

"Our owners, ADG, and our operating company Accor, are very committed to sustainability, and given that air-conditioning is one of the most energy-consuming aspects of hotel operations, we sought specialist advice about energy conservation.

"The humidity of Darwin is a major problem, but by adjusting the temperature setpoints and fan speeds, we...reduced energy waste & kept rooms comfortable."

BALI DOUBLES DOWN ON SUSTAINABILITY

THE Indonesian Government is set to enhance the country's sustainable tourism, particularly in visitor hotspots like Bali.

Indonesia's Ministry of Tourism recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Central Statistics Agency of Indonesia, which will see them work together on policy formulation and data-based decision-making.

"The collaboration between the Ministry of Tourism and BPS is very strategic in ensuring the availability of reliable data and as a basis for policy formulation," Indonesian Minister for Tourism, Widiyanti Putri Wardhana, told local media.

"With a data-driven approach, we can ensure that this sector not only thrives but also provides



broader benefits to society and the national economy."

According to Wardhana, the collaboration will positively impact the growth of Indonesia's tourism sector, allowing the government to create more effective strategies to improve its tourism competitiveness.

Additionally, Bali's waste management issue is expected to be resolved by 2030 thanks to

new policies, announced by Bali's Governor Wayan Koster.

Under the updated rules, Koster said tourism businesses will face ramifications when they cause environmental harm, and when they fail to take responsibility for their waste.

The Governor warned he would not hesitate to revoke business licenses and permits and issue large fines to operators. *JM*

Fiji says cheers to the environment with new 'happy hour'

TOURISM Fiji has launched the world's first happy hour for the environment, with Loloma Hour introduced today.

The initiative offers a program of happy hour activities for travellers to take part in which are designed to preserve the destination's natural beauty and cultural heritage.

Activities include coral planting, a cultural hour, local village tours, and even picking up litter to earn a free coffee.

Loloma Hour's goal is to contribute 5,000 hours of time



to sustainability initiatives in Fiji within the first year, as part of the destination's overarching sustainability goals, in addition to its current sustainability eco-friendly practices.

Visitors can take part in Loloma Hour through partnering resorts, hotels, and tour operators across

the destination.

"True happiness comes not just from what you take, but what you give," Chief Marketing Officer Srishti Narayan declared.

"Loloma Hour gives visitors a chance to help preserve what makes Fiji so special - its people, environment, and traditions.

"The whole concept is grounded in the idea of generosity and doing something for the greater good - not just committing a specific amount of time, but demonstrating goodwill and generosity."

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MONEY

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

AU\$1 = US\$0.601

THE Australian dollar dropped to 59 US cents yesterday - its lowest point against the US dollar, Euro and the pound since Apr 2020.

This was down more than 6% on last week's level before Trump's tariffs were announced, with the decline spelling bad news for travellers looking to head overseas - particularly as the AUD has also lost value in NZ, Indonesia and India.

Wholesale rates this morning.

| | |
|--------------|-----------|
| US | \$0.601 |
| UK | £0.472 |
| NZ | \$1.082 |
| Euro | €0.550 |
| Japan | ¥88.91 |
| Thailand | ฿20.85 |
| China | ¥4.385 |
| South Africa | 11.76 |
| Canada | \$0.855 |
| Crude oil | US\$63.03 |

Disney cooling off

WALT Disney World in Orlando will open both of its water parks during the coming northern summer, the park has confirmed.

Both Blizzard Beach and Typhoon Lagoon will be open for guests to enjoy, the first time Disney has opened both at the same time in over five years.

A new benefit for guests staying at Disney resorts this year allows entry to either water park on the day of arrival without using one of the purchased park days.

Tauck-ing agents to the Douro



TAUCK recently hosted 45 Australian travel advisors and their guests at its Tauck Australia Academy in Portugal for a seven-night training experience.

Guests stayed two nights at the Ritz Four Seasons Lisbon and five nights aboard Tauck's *ms Andorinha*, while also enjoying the chance to explore Lisbon and the Douro River Valley.

During the trip, the advisors successfully completed over six hours of comprehensive classroom training to become Tauck Expert Certified Advisors, unlocking exclusive access to a wide range of benefits.

"To be able to share this exceptional travel experience with some of our trusted Australian travel advisors in our 100th anniversary year, was significant to us," said David Clark, Managing Director Australia.

"We are dedicated to the partnerships we are building with travel advisors and we appreciate their passion for learning about Tauck's offering."

Highlights included a welcome dinner at the Queluz National

Palace in Lisbon; educational tours and guided walks; sampling traditional Portuguese dishes and Douro Valley wine; a cocktail-making session; and a 1920s themed party to celebrate Tauck's 100th birthday. *JM*

The group **pictured** at a luxury Douro Valley wine estate, Quinta da Pacheca.

CI orders more jets

CHINA Airlines has firmed up an order for 10 Airbus A350-1000 long-haul aircraft, which will be deployed on routes from Taipei to North America and Europe.

The fuel-efficient aircraft can reach up to 18,000km non-stop and is the same aircraft to be used by Qantas for its ultra-long Project Sunrise flights.

"Our investment in the A350-1000 supports our international growth strategy and reflects our commitment to improving the travel experience for our passengers," said China Airlines Chairman, Kao Shing-Hwang.

No firm delivery timeline has been announced with the order.



Window Seat

ONCE you pop, the police can't stop, apparently.

Just ask the woman travelling on a Ryanair flight who was recently escorted off the plane by police after she could not pay for a tin of Pringles.

Ann-Marie Murray said she was unable to pay when the in-flight card machine would not accept payment and she had no cash as an alternative.

"They tried with another machine and when it still didn't go through, I offered to get cash when we landed, but they said I couldn't do that," the 55-year-old told UK media.

When it became clear that payment was not going to be possible, Murray offered to return the half-eaten Pringles, however airline staff rejected the offer and instead called the authorities.

"I was shocked when the police came on board and I was asked to leave," she said.

"It was so embarrassing, I had done everything I could to resolve it, and then they told the police I had refused to pay but that wasn't the case - I wanted to pay."

While the heavy-handed tactics saw the passenger unceremoniously turfed off the flight in front of a plane-load of confused passengers, Murray said the story had a relatively happy ending.

"[Police] took me to a cash machine and I was able to pay the £7, the officers were laughing & couldn't believe it."



Solomon Islands Kulture: Shell Money, Panpipes & Voyager 2

The centuries-old cultural ways of the Solomon Islands remain some of the richest to be found anywhere in the South Pacific. 'Kulture' sits at the very centre of society with traditional singing, music, dance and craftsmanship a mainstay of village life, handed down from father to son and mother to daughter and it doesn't matter where you go or at what time of year, chances are you'll be able to experience some truly amazing events . Taking place in May, the extraordinary 'Wogasia' spear fighting in Santa Cruz forms part of the annual yam harvest festivities while in Malaita, the annual Shell Money Festival celebrates the shell money still in use as currency today. Malaita is also famous for its panpipe

music, recordings of which are carried aboard Voyager 2, the space probe launched in 1977, as examples of human culture. Along with spiderweb kite fishing, traditional currency also forms a key part of the annual 'Tinakalu' in Temotu Province where 'red feather money' was in use long before coins and notes arrived. In Choiseul Province, the Melanesian and Micronesian inhabitants celebrate the region's famous 'gnali' nuts. Echoes of the country's headhunting days come to life in December when the people of the Western Province join to celebrate the annual Roviana Lagoon Festival, complete with war canoe racing and visits to the skull shrines on nearby Skull Island,

testament to the days when these gentle people were once renowned as the South Pacific's fiercest warriors. For more information on the Solomon Islands' annual cultural events, visit www.visitsolomons.com.sb

NEED HELP?

Speak to the expert - Tourism Solomons' Trade Manager Australia/New Zealand, Richard Skewes is the go to point for all travel industry related enquiries on 0412 524 699



Phone: 0412 524 699
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