

Travel Daily

First with the news

Thursday 6th Feb 2025

MTA BDM LAUREN RYAN



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Broome terminal plan

THE WA Government has pledged to deliver \$500,000 for a new purpose-built cruise passenger terminal for Broome if it is reelected in the state election on 08 Mar.

Tourism Council WA CEO Evan Hall welcomed the election promise, stating the new infrastructure would drive better experiences and services for cruise ship passengers.

For the full details on the story, see today's *Cruise Weekly*.

Become an ATIA Rockstar

EXCLUSIVE

THE Australian Travel Industry Association (ATIA) has launched its first renewal incentive, offering members the chance to score a range of prizes across land touring, cruising, aviation, and more (*TD* breaking news).

Members who renew their ATIA Accreditation before 31 Mar will automatically be entered into the new Renewal Rockstar prize draw, with winners to be randomly selected on 07 Apr 2025 at ATIA's head office in Sydney.

Prizes on offer include an eight-day Viking cruise; land tours with Intrepid and G Adventures; as well as a range of air tickets courtesy of Qantas, Singapore Airlines, and Virgin Australia.

Further prizes available to win include travel insurance policies with Cover-More, as well as credit with Helloworld's Air Tickets CVFR Consolidation Services.

Reflecting on the new promotion, CVFR Travel Group CEO Ram Chhabra said, "It is a fantastic opportunity for businesses to not only reaffirm their commitment to industry best practices, but also win some



Australian Travel Industry Association great prizes along the way".

Singapore Airlines GM Agency Sales, Greg McJarrow, added being part of the Renewal Rockstar promotion builds on its proud support as the major sponsor of the NTIAs, and reinforces its commitment to recognising and celebrating excellence in travel.

ATIA CEO Dean Long said the promotion underscored the importance of ATIA Accreditation.

"It is more than just a stamp of approval - it's a commitment to excellence and consumer confidence," he said.

For more information on the new incentive, see the ATIA column from Compliance Manager Nina Hedges on **page six**, and view the full list of prizes on *travelBulletin* **HERE**.

Today's issue of *TD*

Travel Daily features eight pages of news, including our **Business Events News** feature.

Air NZ scraps Seoul

AIR New Zealand has been forced to drop its planned seasonal Auckland-Seoul services due to ongoing engine availability challenges across its fleet.

The carrier had previously flagged the launch of the key service from Oct (*TD* 04 Sep 2024), however the final flight will now take place on 29 Mar.

Impacted customers will be contacted by Air NZ, and will be offered a choice of alternative services, a credit, or a full refund.

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Oceania appoints PR

GTI has been appointed to handle the public relations and communications for NCLH cruise brand Oceania Cruises across Australia and New Zealand.

The PR account was previously held by Barking Owl Communications.

Luxperience gears for return

PREMIUM travel trade event Luxperience will take place on 07-10 Oct at the ICC in Sydney.

According to the Flight Centre-owned event's Director, Lynn Ormiston (**pictured**), the luxury gathering is keen to engage the international market, particularly as overseas tourism boards shift their focus to ANZ local travellers.

Ormiston said she is also currently in negotiations with global suppliers.

"Our international partners are also flagging the changing patterns of Australian travellers,



who are increasingly more engaged in the countries they are visiting, spending longer and diving deeper into the cultural experiences on offer," she said.

There has also been a shift in appetite for new regions like Scandinavia and Switzerland, although other areas of Europe remain attractive to antipodean luxury consumers, she noted.

"We are focused on finding those intriguing new niche markets and inspired by new properties and unusual experiences that are being launched," Ormiston added.

The feedback from last year's Luxperience event was "overwhelmingly positive", said Buyer and Guest Manager, Lauren Dunemann, with many buyers taking advantage of the curated appointment diary of targeted personal meetings.

"Our focus on what is new, inspiring and unique both in Australia and New Zealand...sets us apart as the most appealing luxury event in the market, driving interest and intent from our audiences," said Dunemann.

Registration for exhibitors will open on 14 Feb 2025. *JHM*

TAF is the new Black

THE winner of Travel Agent Finder's (TAF) profile update competition has been revealed, with Shane Black from SW Black Travel taking out the major prize.

Black will enjoy a 10-day trip in Vietnam for two people courtesy of G Adventures.



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Touchdown for MEL

MELBOURNE will host the first ever NFL regular season game in Australia when the Los Angeles Rams use the MCG as its home ground for a 2026 clash.

The date and kick-off time are yet-to-be-confirmed but it is a massive coup for Victorian tourism in light of the immense popularity of the American sport.

Premier of Victoria, Jacinta Allan, said, "Only Victoria can host an international grand slam, only Victoria can experience the Formula 1 Grand Prix, only Victoria can break records with the Boxing Day Test - and Victoria is now the only city in Australia to host the NFL."

The NFL is currently on a huge global expansion, with regular season games now played in London, Munich, Frankfurt, Mexico City and Toronto.

Club Med 

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ALBATROSS
Tours

Qantas capitalises on Virgin decision

VIRGIN Australia's decision to scrap its Adelaide-Darwin service last week (**TD** 29 Jan) has been followed by Qantas increasing capacity on the route across its mainline and budget brands.

Qantas flights between Darwin and Adelaide will increase from 10 to 14 a week between Apr and May, while Jetstar will also increase flights from four to seven a week between Jul and Oct.

From 26 Jun to 24 Oct 2025, Jetstar also revealed it will operate four weekly flights between Darwin and the Gold



Coast through a new seasonal route, adding 25,000 seats a year.

"This new seasonal service will...eliminate the need for people to transit through other cities and make it much easier and affordable for travellers to fly between the Northern Territory and Queensland," Jetstar CEO Stephanie Tully said.

In further capacity news, Qantas

will beef up the Darwin-Brisbane route from nine to 10 weekly flights in May, and up to 13 in Jun.

The carrier will also move from 11 to 12 flights a week between Darwin and Sydney from Apr to May, moving to double-daily flights between Jun and Oct.

Meanwhile, Darwin to Canberra services will return with thrice weekly flights from Jul to Sep.

In response, Virgin Australia has added nearly 15,000 seats to and from Darwin between the peak seasons of Apr to Oct on existing services, marking a 7% rise on the same period last year. *AB*

AAA unveils lounge

THE AUSTRALIAN Airports Association (AAA) has launched the Members Lounge, a new one-stop-shop for members to keep abreast of member benefits, events, education, and updates.

Those wanting to learn more or register can visit [HERE](#).

NCL firms up orders

NORWEGIAN Cruise Line Holdings (NCLH) has firmed up its order for four new cruise ships with shipbuilder Fincantieri.

Flagged in Apr last year (**TD** 09 Apr 2024), the order is worth more than €2 billion, and will see vessels delivered in 2030, 2032, 2034, and 2036.

With over 5,100 berths, collectively the ships will be able to accommodate over 20,000 passengers, and the design of the vessels will incorporate the latest onboard technology and sustainability features.

Fincantieri has already built two ships for the NCL brand, *Norwegian Prima* and *Norwegian Viva*, while *Norwegian Aqua*, the first unit of the Prima Plus class, will be delivered next month.

The latest order represents the largest ships ever built for NCL.

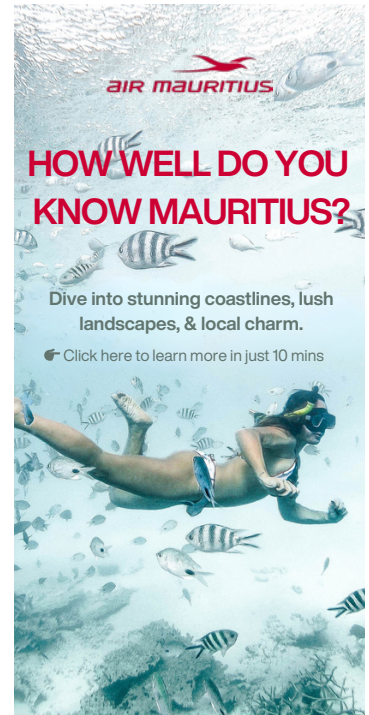


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Busan battery ban

AIR Busan has banned portable power banks being transported in carry-on luggage after suspicions that one may have caused an onboard fire at Gimhae International Airport on 28 Jan.

The blaze occurred prior to take off on a flight heading to Hong Kong, with all 176 passengers and crew evacuated safely.

Passengers will be required to agree to the ban before check-in.

Lodge to Leea in NT

THE new owners of the Travelodge Resort Darwin, boutique hospitality specialists Prendiville Group, is rebranding the property to The Leea, in reference to a plant found in tropical regions of Australia.

Recently refurbished, The Leea is located in the Darwin CBD and becomes the first Northern Territory-based property for Prendiville Group, which largely operates in Western Australia.

VA backs Boeing on orders

EXCLUSIVE

WHILE carriers like Emirates are entertaining the prospect of purchasing Chinese-made COMAC aircraft to combat supply chain issues (TD 31 Jan), Virgin Australia is unlikely to be a client any time soon.

The airline confirmed to *Travel Daily* this week that it is confident of Boeing's ability to fulfil its fleet renewal plans, despite the highly publicised aircraft order backlog impacting carriers globally.

VA said it is in "constant contact" with Boeing, and that it remains optimistic about the manufacturer's strategy to work through current supply issues.

"In line with our commitment to operating a simplified fleet, we are not currently considering COMAC aircraft for our future fleet requirements," VA said.

The Aussie carrier is seeking to streamline its mainline fleet around Boeing 737 aircraft,



adding that it is continuing to actively execute that plan.

As of Jan 2025, VA's fleet consists of 94 Boeing 737 aircraft, including the -700, -800, and MAX-8 models, with an additional 18 MAX-8 planes scheduled for delivery this year.

The carrier's WA-based regional and charter business, Virgin Australia Regional Airlines, also has eight firm orders for Embraer E190-E2 aircraft to replace its aging Fokker 100 fleet from later this year.

COMAC's narrow-body C919 (pictured) has soaked up plenty of headlines since taking off on its first commercial flight in May 2023, intended to be a direct competitor to the B737 and A320.

Qantas declined to comment on any COMAC ambitions. AB



Window Seat

A RATHER brave group of cruise passengers are currently shedding their inhibitions on the annual "clothing-optional cruise" hosted by nudist travel company, Bare Necessities.

Taking place on *Norwegian Pearl*, the naked sailing takes guests on a Caribbean adventure that offers a nude buffet, and clothing-optional tours that require booking.

Although guests aboard the 'Big Nude Boat' are encouraged to "travel lite", the cruise does have some rules, such as requiring pax to remain fully clothed while docked at port, and while in the dining rooms.

One Reddit user posted: "There is nothing better than being naked with 1,800 other naked people".

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Club Med frees its spirit

ALL-INCLUSIVE holiday brand Club Med has launched a new brand campaign across Australia, l'Esprit Libre, which translates to 'Free Spirit' in French.

The new initiative follows the resort company's new visual identity and refreshed image.

"Club Med was founded on a simple yet powerful idea - to create a place where people can experience true happiness," Michelle Davies, General Manager for Club Med Asia Pacific said.

"With l'Esprit Libre, we've been able to capture the essence of that vision.

"Our mission has always been to provide spaces where people can escape the complexities of modern life and reconnect with what truly matters.

"This new campaign invites everyone to escape the hustle and bustle of everyday life and embrace moments of pure,



simple joy."

Developed in collaboration with creative agency 180 Amsterdam, the marketing push is now live across Australia and New Zealand, and is running across out-of-home, social and digital media channels.

ClubMed recorded its most successful opening for a summer season last year, seeing a 210% increase in summer '25 bookings compared to the previous year.

"Following a shift to a 100% upscale strategy in Apr of this year, the demand reinforces Australians' desire for an elevated travel experience," Davies said in Nov last year. *JHM*

Plaza's dual lounge

HOSPITALITY business Plaza Premium Group has launched a brand new dual lounge concept at Vancouver International Airport, combining Plaza Premium Lounge (PPL) and Plaza Premium First (PPF).

The new lounge spans 1,000m², accommodating 251 travellers and offers interactive live cooking stations, a self-service bar, showers and family-friendly amenities.

In the PPL area, travellers from all airlines are welcome.

Within the PPF space, guests looking for some privacy and comfort can enjoy a la carte dining, a bar and spa-like services.



Lufthansa tracks it

LUFTHANSA Group is now integrating Apple AirTags into its baggage tracking.

Passengers travelling on the German company's carrier brands can now share the location of their AirTag or Find My Network accessory via the service.

"The use of Apple AirTag data is one example of many ways in which we are continuously developing the customer journey of all our Group airlines due to innovative digital services," said Dieter Vranckx, Chief Commercial Officer of the Lufthansa Group.

Travelport inks deal

GLOBAL tech giant Travelport and Azerbaijan Airlines (AZAL) have renewed their content distribution agreement.

Agents using Travelport+ can view the fares and services from AZAL in one spot, as well as easily search for the most relevant offers for their clients.



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Travel Daily
ON LOCATION



PALAU

Today's issue of *TD* is coming to you courtesy of Palau Visitors Authority, which is this week hosting a media famil showcasing the island destination.

AFTER four days of immersing ourselves in beautiful Palauan nature, guests will today uncover the destination's dense historical side - and with a country that has been ruled by four different nations (Spain, Germany, Japan, and the US), there is plenty to unpack.

Sam's Tours will take attendees to Peleliu, a WWII-era site, which is considered the most well-preserved battlefield in the world.

It is illegal to remove any relic from the island, so the site remains almost as it was when the Battle of Peleliu ended in Nov 1944.

The conflict took almost 15,000 souls with it, as the heavily outnumbered Japanese held off the Americans before eventually succumbing to their unbearable casualties.

The evening will take a far lighter tone, with dinner at Canoe House - one of the locals' most popular venues - which serves pizzas, sandwiches, salads - and karaoke.

Emirates Dubai deal

TRAVELLERS planning a Dubai trip can enjoy a complimentary stay at the JW Marriott Marquis when they book a return first or business class airfare with Emirates before 26 Feb.

Meanwhile, premium economy and economy pax get a complimentary one-night stay at the Holiday Inn Festival City.

The offer applies to travel between 22 Feb-29 Mar for trips that include a Dubai stopover for 24 or more.

Find out more details [HERE](#).

Main Beach milestone

MAIN Beach Travel Group is celebrating its 25th anniversary this week.

Founded by Gold-Coast based industry veterans Mike and Mandy Dwyer, the company received its first booking in 2000 and has since won 'Australian Best Retail Travel Agency' several times at the National Travel Industry Awards.

According to the industrious pair, their success is about "establishing human connections, understanding desires, and fulfilling needs".

You can hear the story behind how Mike and Mandy grew their business at *Travel Daily's* upcoming virtual event, Home Ex.

To find out more information about the event, click [HERE](#).



Top End air credit

AAT Kings Group has teamed up with Tourism NT to offer travellers a limited-time air credit discount of up to \$1,800 per couple across both its AAT Kings and Inspiring Journeys brands.

The discount is applied directly to the cost of eligible Northern Territory guided tours, with customers able to use the savings toward flights booked through AAT Kings, their travel agent, or as a direct discount on the tour price if flights are booked independently.

Travellers booking qualifying departures up to 31 Dec 2025 can take advantage of a \$500 air credit per person on six-10 day tours using promo code AIRCRED500, or a \$900 air credit per person on 11+ day tours using promo code AIRCRED900.

The offer applies to new bookings made by 17 Apr.

ATIA UPDATE

from Nina Hedges, Compliance Manager



THERE'S never been a better time to renew your ATIA accreditation. Not only does it reaffirm your

place among Australia's most trusted travel professionals, but this year, we're making it even more rewarding with our Renewal Rockstar competition.

Completing your renewal by 31 Mar 2025* doesn't just secure your endorsement as one of the best in the industry, grant you invaluable business resources, support and opportunities - it also puts you in the running for some truly incredible prizes, which are generously provided by our travel industry partners.

We're talking about tours to dream destinations, air tickets and credits, annual insurance policies, cruises, airline memberships and so much more.

It is our way of celebrating your commitment to supporting Australia's peak travel industry

body and your dedication to excellence within our industry.

A new year often comes with resolutions, and if yours includes staying ahead of the industry, maintaining your professional credibility and giving your clients confidence in your services, then ticking off your ATIA renewal should be at the top of your list.

And hey, the chance to win an unforgettable prize just makes it all the more exciting.

So, what are you waiting for? Stop reading and start renewing, because ATIA accreditation is more than just a badge of honour: it's your key to unlocking success, expanding your network, and accessing exclusive industry benefits in 2025.

See [page one](#) for more details on our Renewal Rockstar competition - you don't want to miss this!

*To be in the draw to win one of these incredible prizes, you must submit your renewal to ATIA by 31 Mar 2025, be assessed as eligible for ATIA Accreditation and have paid your ATIA invoice full by Mon, 14 Apr 2025.

Cheap off-peak Japan tours

TRAVELLERS can now pay less to experience Japan during lower demand periods, with InsideJapan Tours announcing a permanent price reduction on its off-peak and shoulder season small group tours (SGTs).

The move, which comes as the Inside Travel Group (ITG) brand marks 25 years of running SGTs in Japan, will see off-season pricing reduced by 15%, while shoulder season pricing will be 7% cheaper.

"There's never a bad time to visit Japan and this isn't about paying less for second best - far from it," said ITG Co-Founder and Director Alastair Donnelly.

"It is a country blessed with

magnificent scenery and experiences, no matter what time you choose to visit."

The price reduction is part of the operator's wider overtourism strategy, which aims to disperse visitors more evenly throughout the year.

"Over the past 25 years, we have seen Japan transform from a niche destination to one of the world's most sought-after travel spots, which has brought its benefits and challenges - particularly during the peak cherry blossom season," Donnelly said.

Tours such as 'Japan Unmasked' travelling in early spring save up \$1,767 versus peak season tours.



Wats On Winarch

WINARCH Group has acquired Sydney-based event management company, Wats On Events, with ambitious plans to grow the business across Australia.

Wats on Events specialises in festival and event bar management and brand activation, offering premium bar operations for some of Australia's most renowned and prestigious events.

The company will now sit within Winarch Group's recently unveiled Winarch Live - its offering of venue, event, safety and management services.

Over the next 18 months, Winarch Live plans to expand Wats On Events into other markets including Melbourne, along with securing food and beverage contracts.

CT PARTNERS TO CASH IN ON EVENTS

CT PARTNERS has unveiled plans to zero in on Australia's meetings and events industry, using its expanding membership of leading event companies to meet the rising demand for in-person events.

As Australia's events sector gears up for the Asia Pacific Incentives and Meetings Event (AIME), the independent travel-buying network is seeking to capitalise on the \$36 billion industry, which is expected to continue its rapid expansion.

CT Partners points to the latest figures from Tourism Research Australia, which reveal that a hefty portion of corporate customers allocate over half of their travel budget to events, with forecasted growth in spending driven by a rising demand for face-to-face collaboration.

In 2025, CT Partners will focus on further strengthening its



presence in the events sector by welcoming more events-focused businesses into its network.

"Meetings and events are emerging as one of the most exciting growth areas in the travel industry," said CT Partners Chief Executive Officer Matt Masson.

"The pandemic fundamentally changed how businesses operate, placing renewed emphasis on in-person collaboration through

off-site strategy days, conferences and team-building activities.

"CT Partners is perfectly positioned to help our members thrive in this dynamic sector and has identified a gap in the market for buying groups which cater to their requirements," he added. JM

Pictured: The CT Partners network in full colour celebrating its 20th anniversary at its 2024 conference in Vietnam.

Parkroyal packages

PARKROYAL Parramatta and Parkroyal Darling Harbour have launched new MICE offers, with discounted Day Delegate Packages now available until 28 Feb for events throughout 2025.

The offer at Parkroyal Darling Harbour is priced at \$89pp (down from \$95), and includes free parking for event organisers; morning tea, lunch, and afternoon tea; and more (see [HERE](#)).

Meanwhile, Parkroyal Parramatta is offering a similar package, starting from \$79pp (down from \$85) - more [HERE](#).

EventsAir, ICCA extend partnership

EVENTSAIR and the International Congress and Convention Association (ICCA) have renewed their strategic partnership, marking their fifth anniversary of collaboration.

The organisations will continue to work together to elevate industry standards and address challenges faced by association event organisers.

"This milestone reflects our mutual commitment to empowering association event



planners," said EventsAir CEO, Chris Ridd (**pictured**).

"We look forward to continuing our work with ICCA to provide innovative tools that help create impactful and engaging event experiences."

BEV grants open

BUSINESS Events Victoria (BEV) has opened the second round of its Regional Business Events Program, supporting national and int'l businesses to host events in regional areas of the state.

The initial round supported 19 recipients, which are expected to inject \$3.7 million into regional communities from Mar 2025.

Grants of up to \$80 per delegate are available, [HERE](#).

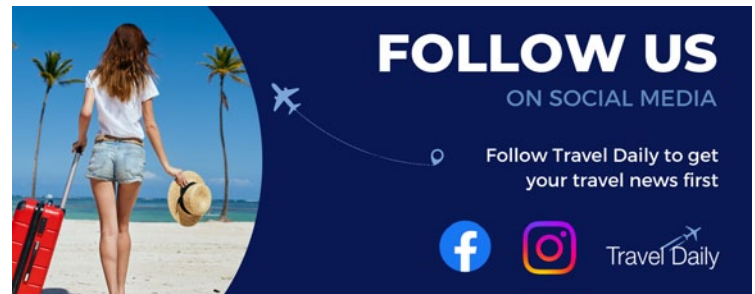
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Outrigger Hospitality Group has announced the appointment of **Rainell Mano** as the new Area Director of Sales & Marketing for its Kaua'i Beach and Kona properties. Drawing on two decades of leadership experience in hospitality, Mano will be responsible for maximising the two resorts' market share, revenue and occupancy growth. Previously, Mano was the Director of Sales & Events at The Ritz-Carlton O'ahu, alongside leadership roles at PRA Business Events, Four Seasons and Marriott International.

Sydney-based cruise marketing expert **Josephine Hanschmann**, who has held roles at Cunard and Viking, has taken up a new role at **Silversea Cruises**, where she will serve as Campaign Marketing Manager.

Centara Hotels & Resorts has welcomed **Prapaijit Thongma** as General Manager of Centara Villas Phi Phi Island. Thongma brings extensive leadership experience and expertise in beach resort management to the new property, set to open in Q1 2025. She has worked for the hospitality company since 2001, most recently as Area General Manager for Centara's two Maldives properties.

National Account Manager at **Delta Air Lines**, **Kristen Axougas**, has announced her decision to step away from the company to focus on family. Axougas said she looks forward to rejoining the airline industry in the future.

Denise Farrell has joined travel management software company Locomate as the General Manager of Travel Operations. The move signals Farrell's return to the travel industry after a few years' break, having previously worked at companies like BCD Travel, Carlson Wagonlit Travel, United Airlines, and The Travel Corporation.

David Fraser has been appointed lead Softel, MGallery and Emblems Operations in the Pacific for **Accor**. Fraser brings over 25 years of industry experience, having previously served as Head of Asset Management at Axsia HTL, where he oversaw projects and transactions exceeding \$16 billion. His career spans senior roles with Marriott International, Starwood, and Hyatt, and he returns to Accor, where he worked from 1995 to 2005.

Sydney-based PR expert **Chloe Curtis** has announced her return to **PEPR Agency** HQ after a year of maternity leave. Curtis has served at the agency's Account Director for three years, and has been with the company for nearly 14 years.

Linkd Tourism has appointed **Sally Miles** to its trade team to represent US and Japanese destinations and product. Miles has many years of experience, including eight years with Japan National Tourism Organization working on business development and marketing. She will work with the Arizona Office of Tourism, Kyushu Tourism Organization, and Aqua Aston Hospitality.

Resort comes out of its shell



NRMA's new Turtle Sands Nature Resort near Bundaberg in Queensland was officially opened this week by the state's Minister for the Environment and Tourism, Andrew Powell.

The ceremony coincided with hatching season, which has seen more than 500 endangered loggerhead, flatback and green turtles come to shire between Oct and Dec last year to lay eggs.

Located in the beachside holiday destination of Mon Repos, the resort offers guests the opportunity to observe the turtles through ranger-led tours, enjoy nearby walking tracks or relax on Turtle Sands beach.

Accommodation options include a range of villas, studios, glamping tents and accessible accommodation options powered by caravan and camp sites.

"It has been a pleasure working with the NRMA Parks and Resorts

team to support the Turtle Sands development, and we're delighted to see the nature resort now thriving in Bundaberg," said Minister Powell.

"Every effort has been taken to create an environmentally sustainable, accessible, quality guest accommodation experience, whilst at the same time helping to safeguard the turtle population.

"We will continue to support ecotourism opportunities like this throughout Queensland which are a major focus of our new 20-year tourism plan and harness our incredible natural assets whilst protecting and preserving the environment, for generations to come and enjoy." **JHM**

Pictured: NRMA Parks and Resorts CEO Paul Davies welcomes Qld Tourism Minister Andrew Powell at the resort's official launch.