# Travel Daily First with the news

Friday 7th Feb 2025



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### LTC adds two more

**BRISBANE-BASED** National Travel Group has joined the Luxury Travel Collection (LTC) as an affiliate member, the first Envoyage-hosted agency to do so.

The agency joins alongside Sydney-based Tailored Journeys.



### Tiz the time to be on stage

**FLIGHT** Centre Travel Group (FCTG) has appointed Tiziano 'Tiz' Galipo to the newly created role of Global Managing Director for its specialist entertainment and sports division, Stage & Screen.

Galipo returns from London to take up the key position, having spent the last six years working with Netflix as Director - EMEA Travel and Expense, in addition to his most recent stint with Corporate Traveller UK as Global Managing Director, Entertainment and Sports Travel.

Galipo is returning to the FCTG



**ENTIRE** Travel Group's Travel Showcase & Soiree events are now sold out, however agents can put themselves on the wait list for each event by emailing events@entiretravel.com.au.

Advisors need to specify which event they would like to attend, and they will be alerted when or if a space becomes available.

Regional and interstate agents who cannot attend one of the three events are also reminded they can access a livestream from the Sydney Showcase on 12 Feb at 4.30pm (AEDT).

The 45-minute stream, produced in partnership with Destination Webinars, will provide a walk through of the expo floor and interviews with exhibitors - agents can register for the Zoom session HERE.



business, having been with Stage & Screen in Australia for more than a decade between 2007 and 2018, where he rose to become General Manager, Australia.

"I couldn't be more thrilled to return to a business that's always had a special place in my heart," Galipo said.

"I was particularly drawn to this role because of its focus on setting strategic direction and long-term goals, but the people were also a huge factor in coming back," he added.

In his new role, the USA, UK, and Canada will be some of the biggest markets for growth to pursue, where the brand will lean on the successful model it has already enjoyed in Australia.

Stage & Screen Australia offers travel services across the entertainment, sports, and creative services sectors. AB

### Today's issue of TD

**Travel Daily** today features seven pages of news, including our Corporate Update plus a full page from AmaWaterways.

### **APT adds departure**

APT has announced an exclusive new cruise in Europe, the 13-day 'Britain and Ireland Explorer', on board the ultra-luxury Seabourn Venture, which is scheduled to depart in 2026.

Prices start from \$19,495pp.







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### AC unbundles bags

AIR Canada has confirmed that Basic fares from Australia no longer include checked baggage, the rule having come into play on flights from Australia on 26 Jan.

Customers choosing the Basic fare will be able to add checked luggage at \$84 for a single checked bag, or \$112 for two.

The Canadian carrier has, however, also added an additional economy product, Comfort, which sits at the top of the economy offerings, and includes two pieces of checked luggage, and is fully refundable.

The move means Air Canada now has four economy options, with only Basic forgoing complimentary checked baggage.

The North American airline flies direct to Vancouver from Brisbane and Sydney.





## JB on track for Bathurst

VINTAGE Rail Journeys, which was acquired last year by Journey Beyond (TD 07 Jun 2024), has launched Bathurst Race'N Rail packages ahead of the Supercars Repco Bathurst 1000 in Oct.

The new product gives travellers the chance to witness the high octane action of one of Australia's most iconic motorsport events, while taking care of their accommodation and travel needs.

"There is no better way to enjoy the Repco Bathurst 1000 than to travel on train to the Great Race! Travel on the Vintage Rail Journeys 1960's ex-Southern Aurora train carriages for the most convenient and fun way to enjoy Australia's greatest touring car race," said JB Executive GM, Sales & Partnerships, Alicia Triggs.

"Your clients can enjoy the convenience of staying on board the train on Friday, Saturday and Sunday nights."

Priced from \$4,945, the Race'N Rail package includes Reserved Grandstand tickets to the race with coach transfers from the train; three nights in Bathurst aboard the Southern Aurora



Vintage Rail Journeys train departing and returning to Sydney Central Station; three breakfasts, one lunch, and three dinners served on board; and is allinclusive of drinks. JM

### Ama sails into town

**FOLLOWING** its first year in the local market, AmaWaterways is inviting Australian and NZ travel trade to its upcoming evening events taking place in Adelaide, Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane, Gold Coast and Auckland.

Regional Sales Managers, the events will include a product update, insights into the brand's future plans, and a presentation from co-owner Gary Murphy.

There will also be prizes, including a European river cruise for two, up for grabs - see the back page for all the details.

Hosted by AmaWaterways'



\* For registration and elegibility, visit trade.northernterritory.com

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### Swartz disembarks

**CARNIVAL** Corporation stalwart Jan Swartz has resigned from the global cruise company after close to 25 years.

Swartz plans to exit her current position as Executive Vice President, Strategic Operations in Apr, with highlights from her long tenure at Carnival Corp including leading the Princess Cruises brand globally as President for seven years, as well as another three taking charge of the Holland America Group.

The high-profile leader confirmed she has not yet locked in any future professional plans, revealing she will instead take some time off while she contemplates her next move.

To read the full story on Swartz's departure, see today's issue of Cruise Weekly.







## Sun rises on Creative Tours'

**SUNSHINE** Coast-based tourism operator Creative Tours has been purchased by Jamie Marshall and Carly Wilkinson (pictured).

The pair have flagged their intention to continue, and improve upon, the company's reputation for running tours that focus on value, local connection, exclusive access, and high quality food and beverages.

The Wilkinsons take over from Josh Donohoe, who founded Creative Tours in 2016, and subsequently formed close bonds with local businesses in the agricultural, brewing, pub, and distillery industries.

While stepping away from ownership, Donohoe said he will continue to be involved in the tourism industry.

"It's been an incredible journey growing Creative Tours into what it is today, and I'm so proud of the experiences we've been able to create, and the local partnerships



and support we have received along the way," he said.

"I'm excited to see the new owners take the business to the next level and bring fresh energy to the team - this isn't goodbye, just a new chapter for all of us."

For the new owners' part, they have signalled an intention to bring their passion for small business and local tourism to the table, having spent much of their professional lives in the sector.

Jamie and Carly have over

## new owners

MONACO

15 years of experience in the tourism, travel, and food & drink industries, with a background in premium supervacht services and local tourism in Europe and the South Pacific regions.

Raised on the French canals where his parents ran restaurant and vineyard tours from their canal barge, Jamie Wilkinson said this is where he developed his deep connection to local agritourism and desire to create authentic travel experiences.

Fluent in English, French and Spanish, he brings a passion for working with small, family-run businesses, including wineries, breweries, and distilleries.

"We are incredibly excited to take on this amazing business and continue its mission of connecting people with the incredible producers, chefs, and brewers who make the Sunshine Coast such a special destination for tourists," Jamie said. AB

### Ecuador shuts gate

**LEARN MORE ABOUT** MONACO WITH TRAVEL DAILY

TRAINING ACADEMY

ECUADOR'S land borders will be closed between 08-10 Feb for the national presidential election taking place on 09 Feb, according to a new Smartraveller update.

Several provinces are currently in a declared state of emergency.

Travellers are advised not to travel within 20km of the border with Colombia, except the official border crossing at Tulcan, due to violent crimes.

### Quakes rock Greece

SANTORINI has been declared a state of emergency until 01 Mar, following recent earthquakes, which have also occurred on the Greek islands of los, Amorgos and Anafi in the Aegean Sea.

Airlines and ferry companies have now added extra departures to mainland Greece.

Local authorities have been alerted and additional emergency management personnel have been deployed to the region.





## TRAVEL TECH SPECIAL REPORT JOIN US ON A DEEP-DIVE INTO THE LATEST TRENDS IN TRAVEL TECHNOLOGY.



CAPTAIN'S Choice will recreate the legendary Qantas Kangaroo route next year, departing Sydney on 03 Feb.

First operated by Qantas in 1947, the commercial passenger route famously flew between Australia and the UK via the Eastern Hemisphere.

It was given its nickname as the flight 'hopped' across several stops as it made its way to London.

Captain's Choice will follow an almost identical flight as Qantas', with stops in Darwin, Singapore, Kolkata, Colombo, Cairo, Toulouse and Rome, then finally, London on 16 Feb. In addition to the journey, pax will enjoy an insider's tour of an Airbus factory and a lavish dinner under the wings of the iconic Concorde.

## New dawn for Eclipse Travel

**ECLIPSE** Travel has unveiled a major brand transformation complete with a new logo and fully redesigned website, reflecting its ongoing commitment to premium, bespoke travel experiences.

The modernised logo (pictured)

### Otaru hires muscle

OTARU in Japan has taken the extreme step of employing security guards to remind tourists to avoid bad behaviour, such as trespassing private premises and blocking road traffic.

Last month, a 61-year-old tourist was hit and killed by a train while taking photos of the famous coastline while on the tracks of Asari train station.

Otaru has a population of 100,000 people and last year, recorded 98,678 overnight international tourists, the highest number it has ever experienced.



is "more than just a fresh design", according to Co-Founder and Director Matt McMillan.

"It represents the premium travel experiences we've been delivering for years, [and is] a visual reflection of the trust and quality our clients have come to expect from Eclipse Travel."

Alongside the logo comes the launch of a revamped website, which now offers significant improvements in functionality, making it easier for clients to explore a wide range of tours and tailor-made itineraries.

The new website also features downloadable destination guides for the agency's specialist areas, featuring insights and tips. JM

### CVFR hosts big ATN

**CVFR** Consolidation hosted the 2025 CVFR Asia Travel Network (ATN) Chinese New Year Celebration this week, bringing together key industry partners for an evening of networking and festivities at the Palace Chinese Restaurant in Sydney.

The event was attended by sponsors including Sabre, Singapore Airlines, China Airlines, VietJet, and many more, all of whom presented prizes to the agent guests.

Now in its third year, the ATN was set up for Asia Specialist VFR agents, and is run by CVFR.

Pictured: China Airlines presenting one of many prizes that were up for grabs on the night.





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## **NZICC** finally has a date



AFTER many delays, the New Zealand International Convention Centre (NZICC) will finally open in Feb 2026, a statement on the project's website has suggested.

The major events facility was first earmarked for a 2019 completion date when it was initially announced a decade ago, however, due to a combination of construction issues and a major fire at the building site in 2019, the project has suffered multiple major delays.

On the cusp of completion, the blaze cost owners SkyCity Entertainment years of setbacks in the NZ\$700 million development, labelling it at the time "absolutely devastating".

Located in the heart of Auckland's CBD, the NZICC is billed as a gateway to culture. innovation, and economic opportunity by the NZ Govt.

"The NZICC is a transformational project, and we are thrilled to name the month we will open our doors," NZICC General Manager Prue Daly said.

"New Zealanders and visitors worldwide will be blown away by the innovation and thought that's gone into every detail of the building - it's configured for anything from a meeting for 20 people all the way up to an international conference for 3,000 delegates," she added.

Following the contractor's delivery of the completed building, the NZICC is expected to commence commissioning and operational readiness activities in the second half of 2025.

"It's a complex undertaking to get ready to open, including scaling up our number of employees and associated training to provide the ultimate customer experience," Daly said.

The centre is estimated to bring 33,000 new international delegates to Auckland every year, and contribute NZ\$90 million of new economic spend annually.

Highlights of the design include configurable spaces with a wide range of functions, as well as pre-function capacity for 2,700 people, and convention capacity for around 3,150 attendees. AB

### Hurtigruten is hungry

**HURTIGRUTEN** has named Maret Ravdna Bulio as its new culinary ambassador.

Buljo will help the cruise line develop menus inspired by the traditional food of the Sami people, an Indigenous group inhabiting northern Norway, Sweden, and parts of Russia. Ingredients typically associated with Sami culture include fresh

Arctic produce such as fish,

berries, meat and dairy.

Travel Daily YEAR IN REVIEW TAKE A LOOK BACK AT THE BIGGEST STORIES FOR THE TRAVEL INDUSTRY IN 2024.

## Travel Daily

### The Year in Review & Where to Next for 2025

With Karen Deveson, MD Collette Australia



A mentor once told me, "You need to complete a full lap of the sun in a role before you truly

understand a company". At the time, a year felt too long - but now, I wholeheartedly agree.

As I reflect on my first year as Managing Director of Collette Australia, I feel immense pride, gratitude, and - let's be honest - a little exhaustion! 2024 has been a milestone year, not just for Collette Australia but for our 107-year-old family business.

### My Top 5 Highlights

#### 1. A Great Year of Results

It's been incredible to see our guided tours resonate with Australian travellers, especially our Explorations small group tours. We've celebrated record-breaking bookings and increased return traveller satisfaction - proof that our focus on evolving guided travel is making an impact. Despite over a century of experience, Collette remains agile, listening to guests and trade partners to refine what touring looks like today and in the future.

2. Our Designers & Tours One of the things I love most about Collette is that the people designing our tours call these destinations home. Our in-destination designers are passionate about creating the

best local experiences, keeping Collette at the forefront of quided holidays.

### 3. Growing Australian Team Our Australian team has expanded significantly, backed

by Collette's commitment to a strong local presence. Our dedicated call centre ensures quick, efficient support, and we've grown our BDM and account manager team to provide personalised service to our agent partners. With a focus on customer excellence, Collette continues to be a fantastic place for people to work and grow.

### 4. Trailblazer Equine Therapy

A standout experience this year was our Trailblazer conference, where we worked with Leading Edge to enhance communication. One key lesson? A 500kg horse won't move until it's ready - just like people, everyone responds differently to leadership styles.

### 5. Pickleball Partnership

In 2024, Collette became the official holiday partner of Pickleball Australia. This fast-growing sport is all about trying new things, being social, and having fun - just like Collette travellers. In March, we will host our first trade Pickleball tournament - so stay tuned for more details!

#### Where to Next for 2025?

We're starting the year with a great offer - up to 15% off all tours worldwide.



## **CORPORATE UPDATE**

## CTM appoints sales chief

CORPORATE Travel
Management (CTM) has
welcomed on board Darren
Toohey (pictured) in the newly
created role of Chief Sales &
Customer Officer.

Toohey's remit will involve advancing the company's five-year growth strategy, focusing on driving new customer acquisition and delivering value to customers through CTM's technology, service and partnerships.

Toohey previously led CWT's global sales and customer retention team, and has 20 years of experience in senior sales and leadership roles.

"Darren's appointment is a key step in executing our global sales and account management strategy," said CTM's Global CCO, Ana Pedersen.

"His leadership will be pivotal to advancing CTM's competitiveness and ensuring we continue to deliver exceptional value to our new and existing customers."

Toohey said he is excited to be joining CTM at "a pivotal time" for the company and industry.

"As customer expectations continue to evolve and innovation reshapes business travel programs, my focus will be on empowering our sales and account management teams to provide highly tailored, impactful solutions to our customers around the globe," he said.

"By forging strong partnerships, exploring new opportunities, and utilising data-driven



insights, I am committed to elevating CTM's reputation as the go-to travel management company for exceeding customer expectations." JHM

### A big lack of diversity

JUST 13.5% of travel tech leaders have a non-white background, according to new research from B2B travel tech PR agency Belvera Partners.

These new revelations come from Belvera's B2B Tech Map, which uses information from LinkedIn profiles from industries including aviation tech; accommodation distribution tech; TMCs; car rental tech; and more.

The worst performing industries included lobby groups, vacation rentals and hospitality schools, none of which have people of colour in leadership roles.

The highest performing vertical was hotel distribution and sales, with 20%.



## Discover our River Cruise Special Report

Click here

## The roadshow was grande



**THE** Leading Hotels of the World Group hosted its Italian roadshow in Sydney last night.

As part of the exclusive cocktail event, 17 luxury hoteliers showcased their properties to travel agents on the rooftop terrace of the Shell House, overlooking the CBD.

Some of the hotels represented last night included the Principe di Piemonte; Principe Forte dei Marmi; Grand Hotel Fasano; Anantara Palazzo Naiadi Rome Hotel; Sereno Hotels; and the Lungarno Collection.

LHW also recently held its annual convention in Marbella, where attendees engaged in discussions around key industry trends, and strategies for elevating guest experiences.

Speakers included Gopi Kallayil, Google's Chief Business Strategist for AI and hospitality market analyst, Jan Freitag. *JHM* 

**Pictured:** MD APAC, Craig Adamson (middle) & his team.

### Bird detection on way

**SOUTH** Korea has confirmed all airports in the country will need bird detection cameras and thermal imaging radars, following a flight that suffered a bird strike and killed 179 people as a result in Dec last year.

The incident was the deadliest aviation disaster in South Korea's history, and investigators have confirmed two of the plane's engines showed evidence of a mass bird strike event.

Currently only four airports in South Korea are equipped with thermal imaging cameras, and at this stage it is unknown if any have specialist bird detection radars installed.

The rollout of the airport technology will start in 2026.

While birds have been listed as a crucial factor in the crash, local investigators are yet to determine the full range of causes, including why the landing gear of the plane was not deployed.

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## **SPECIALS**

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Travelmarvel is offering a complimentary three-night Munich city stay, valued at over \$2,200 per person, when travellers book its 'Highlights of the Danube' river cruise. Priced from \$3,295pp, the seven-night cruise explores eight of Europe's most charming towns, villages and cities including Bratislava, Vienna and Passau, with 24 meals plus beer, wine and soft drinks included. More details HERE.

Travellers can save up to \$650 on a range of Railbookers journeys, such as the 17-day 'Ultimate Canada Coast to Coast' and the 18-day 'Alaska Rail and Sail with Denali National Park from Chicago'. CLICK HERE to see all available offers

Aircalin has kicked off its latest sale, with Aussies able to save on airfares to New Caledonia. Return flights are available from Sydney to Noumea from \$529, and from Brisbane to Noumea from \$569. The sale ends 21 Feb - more information HERE.

In celebration of its 30-year anniversary, Chiva-Som Hu Hin is offering a 10% saving across its 16 wellness retreats when staying in one of the resort's Thai Pavilions or Thai Pavilion Suites throughout 2025. Additionally, guests staying between o1 Jun-30 Sep 2025 will enjoy a complimentary night when booking four nights, as well as VIP fasttrack service on arrival at Suvarnabhumi Airport and a free round-trip limousine service to and from Hua Hin. An additional earlybird saving of 10% applies for the above when booking by 31 Mar. See HERE

BIG4 Ingenia Holidays Cairns Coconut is offering 20% savings for guests who stay two or more nights. Situated in lush tropical gardens just minutes from the Great Barrier Reef and Daintree Rainforest, the holiday park features resort-style pools and accommodation ranging from cozy cabins to villas. The end of summer sale wraps up on 03 Apr use code SUM25 when booking. CLICK HERE to learn more.

Travellers can save up to 15% on Collette tours thanks to the brand's 'Where to Next?' worldwide sale. For example, the 'Wilderness of Southern Africa: Safari by Land and Water' tour departing o7 Mar 2025 now features a discounted price starting from \$10,837 per person. On until 28 Feb 2025, the discount applies to bookings for tours from 01 Mar 2025 through 30 Apr 2026. Call 1300 792 195 for more information.

Now is the perfect time for travellers to plan a holiday in Marlborough Sounds, with the newly renovated **Portage Resort** launching its 'Stretch Your Stay' offer. Guests who stay two nights in any room type will save 20% on bookings made before 31 Apr. The resort features refreshed accommodations, premium waterfront dining, and a host of outdoor experiences like hiking, kayaking, and luxury picnics - details HERE.

Solomon Airlines has launched discounted airfares between Brisbane and Auckland, starting from \$521 return. Enquire HERE for more info.



## Wentworth refines events



**SOFITEL** Sydney Wentworth has revealed its revamped luxury conferencing and events spaces as part of a recent \$70 million major refurbishment.

"At Sofitel Sydney Wentworth, we are redefining the art of luxury conferencing," said Sam Panetta, General Manager Sofitel Sydney Wentworth.

"Our commitment to innovation and excellence ensures that every event is an unforgettable experience, supported by the latest technology and world-class services," he added.

New cutting-edge technology has been installed as part of the transformation, off the back of a a multi-million dollar investment in new tech by Encore, Sofitel's invenue event production partner.

Further new features include a giant LED screen in the Wentworth Ballroom, which can be split into three 5.5x3-metre screens on a rolling track, as well as a range of Al-powered cameras with wireless connectivity.

Also featured are advanced digital screens and LED upgrades in all meeting spaces, featuring sound systems, customised lighting and new staging tech.

Sustainability is another key priority for the Sofitel upgrade, as all dishes on the event menu now showcase local, organic and sustainable produce, alongside energy-efficient lighting and motion-controlled electricity which have now been installed.

Single-use plastics have been eliminated from the hotel since 2022, and several recycling programs and water-saving initiatives are in place.

"I am honoured to be part of this new chapter at Sofitel Sydney Wentworth," said Robyn Davison, Director Conference and Events.

"Our state-of-the-art facilities, exceptional culinary offerings, and dedicated events team will ensure that every occasion is seamless, sophisticated, and truly unforgettable," she added. JHM

Pictured: The upgraded lobby.

## Travel Daily

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## An Evening with AmaWaterways

After our first year in market, we have so much to share at this trade only event!

Enjoy updates from AmaWaterways team members including Co-owner Gary Murphy and your Regional Sales Manager.

Plus, some lucky advisors will win fabulous prizes.

# ADELAIDE Ayers House - The Conservatory 288 North Tce, Adelaide

### **THURSDAY, 27 FEBRUARY 2025**

6:00pm - 8:00pm (registration from 5:30pm)

### MELBOURNE

Melbourne Place Hotel - Emerald Room & Sage Bar 130 Russell St, Melbourne

### **MONDAY, 3 MARCH 2025**

6:00pm - 8:00pm (registration from 5:30pm)

### SYDNEY

Swissotel Sydney 68 Market St, Sydney

### **WEDNESDAY, 5 MARCH 2025**

6:00pm - 8:00pm (registration from 5:30pm)

### BRISBANE

The Star Casino - Moreton Room 33 William St, Brisbane

### **TUESDAY, 11 MARCH 2025**

6:00pm - 8.00pm (registration from 5:30pm)

## GOLD COAST

HOTA - Panorama Room 135 Bundall Rd, Surfers Paradise

### WEDNESDAY, 12 MARCH 2025

6:00pm - 8.00pm (registration from 5:30pm)

## AUCKLAND

### **TUESDAY, 18 MARCH 2025**

6:00pm - 8:00pm (registration from 5:30pm)





