



Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today features six pages of news including **Business Events News** plus a full pages from:

- Titan Travel
- G'Day Group

QF shakes up loyalty

QANTAS has announced a major overhaul of its Frequent Flyer program, which will see loyalty members require up to 20% more points for Classic Upgrades and Classic Reward seats on domestic and international flights.

The points required for a Classic Rewards return trip from Sydney to London, for instance, will jump by 15% from 110,400 to 127,000, while a Sydney to Melbourne business class reward seat will cost 19,300 points plus \$76, up from 18,400 points and \$55.

However, Frequent Flyer members will be also able to earn a higher number of points on Qantas domestic flights, by up to 25%, while Jetstar reward flights will require fewer points for starter fares in some cities.

"These adjustments will ensure we can continue to invest in enhancing the program for the long-term and continue to grow the levels of classic and classic plus reward seat availability for members year on year," Qantas Loyalty CEO Andrew Glance said.

The changes, which come into effect from Apr, mark the first time Qantas has raised its classic reward pricing since 2019.

JB inks wild resort deal

JOURNEY Beyond's strategy of creating more value and experiences for its core rail services will ramp up in 2025, led by the announcement of a luxury wildlife resort being added to its burgeoning portfolio (*TD* breaking news yesterday).

The 78-room Monarto Safari Resort (**pictured**) in South Australia will be managed by Journey Beyond in a deal signed with Zoos South Australia and the site's owner Gerry Ryan.

Guests will enjoy premium accommodation and amenities, as well as unique access to the neighbouring Wild Africa precinct of Monarto Safari Park.

Those staying at the resort will be able to view a range of African wildlife such as southern white rhinoceroses, cheetahs, hippopotamuses, zebras, and giraffes roam the grassland plains.



Journey Beyond Executive General Manager David Donald said the company's newest tourism asset located just an hour's drive from Adelaide will be "more than just a hotel".

"This is an opportunity to immerse yourself in authentic wildlife experiences," he said.

"Here, you can connect with wild Africa, witness the beauty of diverse species, and indulge in the serenity of your surroundings," Donald added.

When it opens on 28 May, the property will also offer 20 luxury tents in the safari lodge, a world-class spa with treatment rooms, a thermal plunge pool, as well as function and restaurant spaces.

The site has recently undergone a \$60 million upgrade investment.

Bookings and packages for Monarto Safari Resort will be available from 03 Feb, with bookings at the Monarto Safari Lodge to follow shortly after at a date still to be determined.

More news from Journey Beyond on **page two**. *AB*

Bunnik's big sale

BUNNIK Tours has launched its 'Hot Deals' sale, offering savings of up to \$2,000 per person on hundreds of guaranteed departures in 2025.

The promotion spans Europe, Asia, Africa, and South and Central America, with new deals to be added regularly throughout the year.

Now live, the Hot Deals collection includes the 24-day 'Italian Discovery' itinerary, now priced from \$14,770 per person - see more **HERE**.

Say G'Day to savings

G'DAY Group is offering 25% savings at its Discovery Parks when booking two-night stays before 31 Mar - see **back page**.

Earn a \$100 voucher

AGENTS will score a \$100 digital MasterCard for every client they book on any Titan tour, which are now on sale offering savings of up to 25% - from Swiss rail journeys to safaris in Africa.

Find out more information on **page seven**.

Holland America

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A new level of rail luxury

JOURNEY Beyond is preparing to push the boundaries of premium rail travel, unveiling two new luxury suites that will be available on The Ghan, Indian Pacific and Great Southern services from Apr 2026.



Announced yesterday in Melbourne at its 2025 season launch (**TD** breaking news yesterday), the soon-to-rollout Australis and Aurora suites are designed to set the highest standard of luxury train travel in Australia and overseas, with the Aurora Suite double the size of platinum cabins, and Australis options are triple the space.

Travellers booking aboard the new suites will enjoy Bollinger La Grande Annee champagne, premium wine, butler service, and in-suite bar, as well as a range of exclusive land experiences.

Other perks include access to a platinum club lounge and private chauffeur on arrival and departure from the train.

Journey Beyond CEO Chris Tallent said the suites

represented a “moving luxury like no other”.

“As demand for international travel continues to surge, we recognise the necessity to enhance the travel experience, ensuring it meets and surpasses global standards,” he said.

Prices start from \$11,890pp for the Australis suite, and \$7,990pp for the Aurora suite for a three-day journey on The Ghan.

Find out more details [HERE](#). **AB**

Uluru shines brighter

AYERS Rock Resort has announced its acclaimed art installation, the Field of Light at Uluru, has undergone a major expansion and been extended until at least Apr 2027.

The upgrades saw the replacement of all the luminous and fibre optics that make up the installation, ensuring the attraction remains a huge drawcard for regional tourism.

The signature ‘A Night at Field of Light’ dining experience has also been upgraded, with the 4.5-hour event now featuring telescopes for stargazing and a refreshed canape and buffet menu.

The Field of Light has been visited by over 730,000 people since its 2016 launch.

Albatross opens '26

ALBATROSS Tours has opened pre-registration for its summer 2026 itineraries, with advisors able to register their clients early without obligation.

“Thanks to the support of our partners, we have seen significant increase in demand over the past 12 months and several tours and dates sell out very quickly,” MD Shelley Poten said.

Conference turns to Gold



ANTHONY Goldman, Joint Managing Director at Goldman Group, was the guest presenter at Abercrombie & Kent’s recent sales conference in Melbourne.

Goldman shared his insights on the current landscape of the industry, the role of travel advisors, and his thoughts on what’s in store for the future. **JM**

Pictured: Goldman with Marett Taylor, Chief Sales Officer A&K.

Eagle back to China

GOLDEN Eagle Luxury Trains has announced its return to China after four years, with the launch of its new train, the Golden Eagle Silk Road Express.

The 22-day ‘Grand Silk Road’ voyage will take guests from Beijing to the cities of Samarkand, Bukhara, and Khiva, and beyond to Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

Guests can also opt for a 13-day ‘The China and Tibet Rail Discovery’ itinerary, which ventures into the heart of China and the wilderness of Tibet.

The new train launches as Golden Eagle celebrates its 35th anniversary, and “represents the next chapter in our ongoing mission to provide discerning travellers with immersive and luxurious journeys to fascinating destinations”, said Tim Little, the company’s founder.

Allura’s French allure

OCEANIA Cruises has announced it will bring its signature French restaurant, Jacques, to its newest ship, *Allura*, which debuts in Jul (**TD** 22 May 2024).

Already popular among guests on board *Marina* and *Riviera*, Jacques will open aboard *Allura* in Oct, featuring favourite dishes as well as new flavours.



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Window Seat

MINCE pies are emblematic of Christmas all over the world, but traveller who bite into one while visiting the UK may not realise they are actually breaking the law.

The statute dates back to the 1600s when United Kingdom political figure Oliver Cromwell ruled England.

A key figure in the English Civil Wars of the mid-1600s, Cromwell oversaw England during an 11-year period when no monarchy was in place.

In that time, the power-mad Cromwell cancelled Christmas, banned football matches, ordered the closure of theatres and pubs and criminalised the eating of mince pies - a law that has thankfully never been technically rescinded.

The rise of Gen Z nomads

THE next generation of Australian travellers is opting for domestic road trips over international holidays, with 42% of school-leavers hitting the road to experience 'van life' during their gap year.

The new statistics, released by Caravanning Queensland, show that Gen Z interest in caravan and camping has skyrocketed over the past few years, with 22% of the younger cohort purchasing an RV.

The trend means that Gen Z and Millennials now account for 45% of the caravan and camping segment, overtaking grey nomads, who make up 36%.

"Young Australians are embracing the freedom and flexibility of van life, and we're seeing a seismic shift in how the next generation approaches travel and adventure," said Jason Plant, Chief Executive of Caravanning Queensland.

"The rise in RV ownership



among Gen Z, combined with their growing preference for domestic travel, is transforming caravanning into a vibrant and youthful movement."

Plant believes the trend shows no sign of slowing down, particularly as younger travellers are priced out of international travel due to the cost of living.

"They choose to work in regional and remote communities, supporting local economies for a period of time before heading off to a different location and we expect this momentum to continue well into the future." JM



LONDON

Today's issue of TD is coming to you courtesy of VisitBritain, which is hosting key Aussie and Kiwi buyers at its flagship event, Showcase Britain.

SMASH hit TV show *Ted Lasso* will be in focus for VisitBritain's buyers this morning, with a walking tour of Richmond set to dazzle fans of the series.

Afterwards, the group shifts into business mode, heading to the decadent Hampton Court Palace for Showcase Britain.

The group will be on hand to meet local suppliers and witness the launch of 'Starring Great Britain', VisitBritain's new campaign aimed at showcasing Great Britain through a litany of locations immortalised by famous movies and TV shows.

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Govt heads off Rex demise

THE Federal Government has become the largest creditor of Rex Group after confirming speculation circulating last year (**TD** 13 Dec 21024) that it will acquire \$50 million of the carrier's debt (**TD** breaking news).

In justifying the decision, Federal Transport Minister Catherine King said the move was key to preventing any adverse outcomes, such as liquidation of the embattled airline.

In buying the debt, the govt will become the principal secured creditor of Rex, and will also seek to become a voting member of creditors formally advising the external administrator.

Responding to the news, the Australian Travel Industry Association (ATIA) CEO Dean Long said the Federal Government's decision is an important measure to ensure ongoing services to regional Australia and competition in the skies.

Hong Kong-based investor PAG remains a minority secured creditor in the business. **AB**

70% delaying travel

SEVEN in 10 Aussies are tightening their belts and delaying domestic and international trips, a report from Insure & Go claims.

The survey found that 65% of have a travel bucket list item they are keen to tick off, but it will take some time to afford it.

According to Insure & Go's findings, 63% said they need to save up more than a year for their dream holiday, while 32% require more than two years.

The financial strain was particularly felt by those aged 30-49, as 78% indicated the need to postpone their trips.

For the under-30s, Europe was the most popular bucket list destination (67%), followed by Asia (53%) and the US (41%).

Celebrity's new Edge

CELEBRITY Cruises has announced it will welcome its sixth Edge Series ship in 2028, after signing a new agreement with French shipbuilder, Chantiers de l'Atlantique.

Dubbed *Xcel 2*, the Edge Series vessel will be the sister ship to *Celebrity Xcel*, which is herself gearing up for a highly-anticipated inaugural sailing later this year (**TD** 02 Oct 2024).

Like Celebrity Cruises' other Edge Series ships, *Xcel 2* will feature the Magic Carpet, a floating platform at sea, and the Infinite Veranda staterooms, as well as "other yet-to-be-announced innovations".

The cruise line's parent company, Royal Caribbean Group, now has a pipeline of eight ships on order, including two that are set to debut this year - Royal Caribbean International's *Star of the Seas* and *Celebrity Xcel*.

For more details, see today's issue of **Cruise Weekly**.

Travel Daily
ON LOCATION



BUENOS AIRES

Today's issue of **TD** is coming to you courtesy of **Viking** who are this week hosting key industry partners on an Antarctic expedition aboard **Viking Polaris**.

TRAVEL Daily, along with a contingent of Viking's key industry partners have arrived in Buenos Aires, Argentina ahead of embarking on an expedition to Antarctica aboard one of the brand's two expedition ships, *Viking Polaris*.

The bucket-list itinerary kicks off with a pre-departure day in the Argentinian capital.

Guests can spend the day exploring the vibrant city at their leisure, taking in the postcolonial architecture, intimate barrios and rich culture.

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Melb delivers

MELBOURNE has secured the rights to host landmark global gender equality conference, Women Deliver 2026, thanks to a successful bid led by the Melbourne Convention Bureau.

Taking place between 27-30 Apr at Melbourne Convention & Exhibition Centre, the event is expected to attract around 6,500 delegates from across 170 countries.

The conference will amplify the voices of the APAC region in global conversations about gender equality.

Featuring hundreds of sessions and a diverse range of exhibitors and activities, the gathering will address key topics such as reproductive health and the empowerment of marginalised communities.

STADIUMS QLD'S NEW LEADERS

THE Stadiums Queensland Board has welcomed five fresh faces to contribute their experience and expertise in the lead-up to the Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

The new-look board now features John Warn, an existing board member and the CEO for Experience Gold Coast, as the new Chairperson.

He is joined by new appointees Debra Rains, who owns Gallivanter Travel; former Paralympian, Michael Dobbie-Bridges; MD of BMS Group, Stephen Moore; FleetCrew co-founder, Mary-Ann Strelow; and a former Mayor of Noosa Shire Council, Clare Stewart.

Existing board member Brendan O'Farrell will remain as a director.

The refreshed Stadiums Queensland Board will play a pivotal role in shaping the future



of the state's sporting sector, helping to manage, develop, operate and promote the use of the its major sport, entertainment and recreational facilities.

"These appointments reflect our government's dedication to ensuring our state remains a global leader in sport and entertainment," Minister for Sport Tim Mander said.

"The new appointees bring

diverse expertise and a shared commitment to ensure Queensland's iconic venues deliver world-class and host key sporting events experiences leading up to and beyond 2032."

Mander also thanked the outgoing Board members, in particular Cathy McGuane, the outgoing Chairperson. *JM*

Pictured: Queensland Sport and Athletics Centre (QSAC).

Sustainable Sofitel

SOFITEL Sydney Darling Harbour has partnered with Greening Australia to launch its latest incentive offer, which gives back to the environment.

For every event booked in Q1 2025 with a revenue spend of \$50,000-\$100,000, Sofitel Sydney will donate \$500 to Greening Australia, which works to restore unique landscapes and protect biodiversity around the country.

The offer is applicable to new bookings only for 2025 events, with the initial deposit paid by 31 Mar 2025 - enquire [HERE](#).

BEIA Approved PCO appoints new Chair

RACHEL Cook has been announced as the new Chair of the Business Events Industry Aotearoa (BEIA) Approved Professional Conference Organisers (PCO) Group, which consists of 16 companies qualified to handle complex domestic and international association conferences.

Taking over from previous Chair, Ama Wahl-Davies, Cook is the Business Director of Conference Innovators (CI), where she has helped build and

support the team during her 20 years with the company.

As Chair, Cook will focus on building value for the members of the BEIA PCO group and strengthening collaboration within its network.

Cook shared: "It is a privilege to step into the role of Chair for the BEIA PCO group, representing a network of professionals who uphold the highest standards in the conference and event management industry."

Mulpha GM goes

MULPHA Events' long-time General Manager, Johan Hasser, has resigned after 12 years of leading a growing portfolio of major events, including the Sanctuary Cove Int'l Boat Show (SCIBS).

Johan leaves the Australian company after overseeing a record-breaking 2024 SCIBS, which attracted 335 exhibitors and 43,741 visitors.

Senior Events Manager Corey Rattray-Wood will fill Hasser's role in the interim.



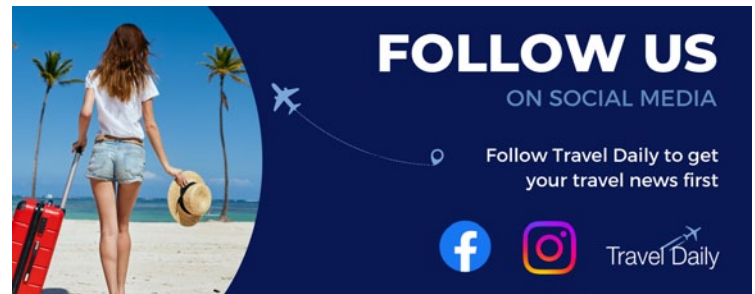
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The Ritz-Carlton Hotel Company has named **Oliver Eller** as the General Manager of The Ritz-Carlton Maldives, Fari Islands. Eller's travel industry career spans more than 30 years, and includes stints with Ritz-Carlton properties in Moscow, Wolfsburg, Berlin, New Orleans, Sharm El Sheikh, and Buckhead.

The Royal Portfolio has appointed **Nigel Pace** as Executive Head of Sales. Pace has almost 30 years of experience in the hospitality industry, and has managed hotels for around 25 years. His past positions include General Manager of The Plettenberg, an SLH Hotel, GM of Cape Grace, A Fairmont-Managed Hotel, and Singita Kruger National Park.

CruiseHQ has welcomed **Kimberly Ryan** as its National Business Development Manager, bringing with her 14 years of experience in the travel industry, including eight years within the cruise sector. Ryan worked with Carnival Cruise Line as a BDM from 2018-2023, and most recently served as a Trade Account Director with travel marketing communications agency GTI.

Victoria Peterson has joined **Salter Brothers Hospitality** as Director of Marketing Performance. She brings a wealth of experience to the role, having led marketing efforts for The Langham Gold Coast, InterContinental Hayman Great Barrier Reef, an IHG Hotel, and InterContinental Sanctuary Cove Resort, an IHG Hotel.

Marriott International has elected **Sean Tresvant** to its board. Tresvant currently serves as the Chief Executive Officer of fast food restaurant chain Taco Bell. Marriott Chair David Marriott hailed Tresvant's reputation as having overseen some of his company's "most innovative transformations", both in the US domestic market, and Internationally.

Fiona Messent is taking on the role of **Qantas Group's** Chief Sustainability Officer. The appointment marks the pinnacle of Messent's long, multi-tenured run with Qantas, during which time she has served in a number of roles, such as Executive Manager Climate Change, Head of Climate Change, and Senior Sustainability Manager.

Anne Lee is back at **GTI** as Trade Marketing Director, for what she is calling "round two" at the travel marketing communications agency. She previously spent more than 10 years with GTI, between 2010 and 2023, after which she took up her most recent role, as The Travel Corporation's Senior Industry Partnerships Manager.

Pullman Sydney Penrith has announced **John Pugliano** as the new Executive Chef of its Marcel Bar & Bistro. The experienced chef formerly worked at Nobu London, and will blend his rich Italian heritage with Marcel's refined modern European menu. Pugliano's new role will also see him provide his culinary expertise to the adjacent Western Sydney Convention Centre.

MI6 keeping an eye on buyers



EIGHT product buyers from Australia and New Zealand saw London from high above and deep below as part of a family stay in the city this week.

The group is exploring the UK capital ahead of VisitBritain's 2025 edition of 'Showcase Britain' on Fri, a chance for each to meet with new and existing suppliers and explore new products for their respective brands.

Today's adventures began with a tour to some of the city's lesser known highlights aboard a fleet of London's iconic black cabs.

Highlights included admiring the MI6 British Intelligence building from across the Thames, which was famously destroyed in the James Bond film *Skyfall*.

From there, it was off to Pall Mall, where the group witnessed part of the Changing of the Guard ceremony outside nearby Buckingham Palace.

After a short walk to Pall Mall, the group visited the Berry Bros & Rudd wine and spirit distillery to learn about how it first crafted The King's Ginger, a special

liqueur crafted for King Edward VII in 1903, while the store itself goes all the way back to 1698.

The tour concluded with a lunch visit to the luxury boutique hotel One Aldwych, currently undergoing a significant renovation, reopening on 25 Feb.

Following lunch, the group ventured deep below the surface into the former Strand underground station, which is now disused and serves as a popular niche tour for fans of London's transport history.

Along with being a working Tube station for many years, the station was one of several to act as a shelter for thousands of Londoners during the blitz. *ML*

The group is **pictured** above outside MI6 and includes Jeremy Van Heerde, Bunnik Tours; Fiona Edgar, Helloworld; Fleur Williams, House of Travel NZ; Kate Moriarty, Infinity Holidays; Adam Townson, Travel Associates AU/NZ; Robina Frosinini, Abercrombie & Kent; Ned Curtis, Qantas Holidays; Maria Marendy, Flight Centre and Peta Evans, VisitBritain.



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