



Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today features nine pages of the latest travel industry news including a photo page from **Travellers Choice**, our **Business Events News** page, plus a full page from **Imagine Cruising**.



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Envoyage makes US push

FLIGHT Centre Travel Group (FCTG) has made the decision to fold its Liberty Travel brand in the United States into its Envoyage division as it looks to ramp up expansion plans in the region.

The move will make Envoyage its principal leisure brand in the country, and see around 100 agencies operating under the Liberty moniker make the swap to Envoyage branding from 01 Jul.

The Envoyage network is on a

strong global growth trajectory, now boasting around 2,500 members across the US, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa, with the independent arm nearly doubling membership numbers and sales volumes since launching in Feb 2024.

"Through extensive market research conducted in the United States and across our global markets, the message from consumers and the industry alike is clear: 'Envoyage is a desirable, aspirational brand'," said Danielle Galloway, Global MD of Luxury and Independent brands at FCTG.

Liberty Travel has operated mainly as a remote agency operation in the United States since major closures of retail stores during the pandemic.

In an update to the ASX last month (**TD** 28 Apr), FCTG also flagged it will investigate expansion of its independent agent branch in Canada, which has faced headwinds. **AB**

QF tweaks schedule

QANTAS will reduce its Sydney-Johannesburg services from next year, dropping the flights from five to four times weekly.

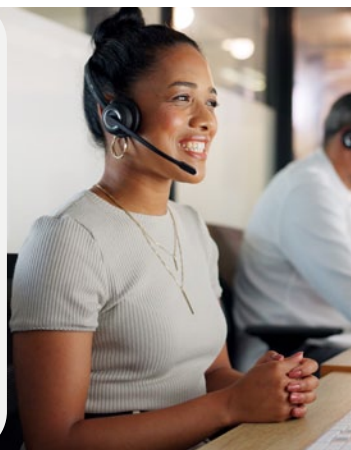
The carrier will make the cut from 30 Mar 2026, after the airline initially flagged the move will take place from Feb 2026.

Qantas is also increasing its capacity on its Sydney-Honolulu route, replacing the B787-9 with a larger A330-300.

Qantas and Amadeus

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Join our interactive Virtual Classroom to explore the Qantas NDC Booking and Servicing experience for Amadeus agents on May 28.

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Win a \$100 gift card

TRAVEL advisors can score a \$100 Prezzy voucher for each Imagine Cruising booking they make before 30 Jun.

VIP Ricky Martin concert tickets are also up for grabs - head to **page 10** of today's **Travel Daily** for more info on the incentive.

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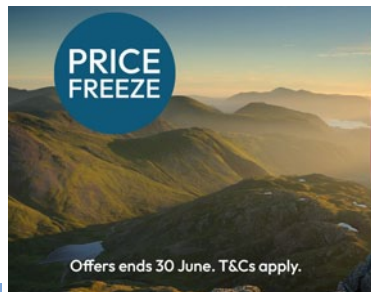
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Sydney tops events

TWO global rankings confirmed Sydney's position as the world's favourite Australian destination for events earlier this week.

Sydney was selected as the Australian destination of choice by the International Congress & Convention Association 2024 Country & City Rankings.

The city's popularity was also recognised by Cvent as one its top meeting destinations in APAC.

More events news on **page 8**.

New Viet player is coming

A NEW Vietnamese carrier is set to emerge in the market, with the country's prime minister approving the establishment of Sun PhuQuoc Airways.

The airline, owned by real estate and hospitality developer Sun Group, will reportedly begin operations with an initial investment of 2.5 trillion dong (A\$149 million) and plans to launch its first flight by the fourth quarter of this year.

Sun PhuQuoc Airways, which will compete with the likes of Vietnam Airlines, VietJet, and Bamboo Airways, aims to expand its fleet to 31 aircraft by 2030, and will provide both commercial and charter flights.

The carrier will focus on bringing more international visitors to Vietnam's southern Phu Quoc Island, a Sun Group



statement said.

The airline will also target other "major tourism and business destinations in Vietnam and around the world". *JM*

Ormina departures

SMALL group tour operator Ormina Tours has released early access to 2026 departures on some of its most popular tours.

Agents are now able to book clients on the company's best sellers including 'Enchanting Puglia', 'Sicily Bella' and 'Italian Lakes and Swiss Mountains', a tour heavy on luxury content.

More information on departure dates and pricing can be found on Ormina's website **HERE**.

ACA drops anchor

THE Australian Cruise Association (ACA) has announced the keynote speakers for its annual conference, which will be themed 'Anchoring Success Across Every Region'.

Registrations are now open for the conference, which will take place in Fremantle, and will be helmed by three international experts in deployment and destination management.

Leading the keynote program will be Holland America Line Director of Deployment & Itinerary Robert de Bruin; Princess Cruises Director of Deployment & Itinerary Planning Debbie Holbrook; and Norwegian Cruise Line Holdings VP of Destination Services Christine Manjenci - more in today's **CW**.

Time to do better

INTREPID Managing Director ANZ Brett Mitchell has called on the travel sector to "do better" on animal rights after a hotel in Mexico was shut down last week following allegations of cruel treatment of dolphins.

The luxury Hotel Barcelo in Riviera Maya located south of Cancun had been confining dolphins in tanks no larger than swimming pools for the amusement of premium tourists, but is now under investigation for inhumane practices.

Speaking with **Travel Daily**, Mitchell said marine animals should be viewed responsibly in their natural habitats.

"Animals are an essential part of our natural ecosystem, and we are responsible for protecting their habitats and ensuring their longevity," he said.

"That's why we work with organisations like World Animal Protection to raise industry standards and support tourism that protects wildlife.

"In the long run, that leads to more meaningful experiences for all - people, animals and the planet," Mitchell concluded.



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VTIC rues missed funding

THE Victoria Tourism Industry Council (VTIC) has hit out at the state government for keeping its funding allocation at the reduced \$6 million amount received last year (**TD** 08 May 2024).

VTIC Chief Executive Felicia Mariani (**pictured**) labelled the budget “disappointing”, saying the government has missed a chance to invest in an industry



that can contribute significantly to the state’s economic growth.

“This budget confirms that, over this year and next year, marketing efforts to promote Victoria around the world will have seen a \$52 million reduction in funding,” Mariani said.

The VTIC chief said the decision made no sense when considering the state’s visitor economy is tipped to grow to nearly \$55 billion in visitor spend by 2030.

However, Mariani said the organisation was appreciative of funding for initiatives such as the Melbourne Airport Rail Link, the business events sector and a number of creative programs. *ML*

APT joins USTOA

APT Travel group has joined the United States Tour Operators Association (USTOA) in a bid to “build trust and strengthen [its] relationships with North American travellers”, according to the Australian operator’s Chief Executive Officer, David Cox.

USTOA President and CEO Terry Dale said APT’s “long-standing reputation for quality and innovation aligns seamlessly with the association’s values”.

US intent still low

INTENTION to travel to the USA from key long-haul markets will remain low and continue to soften until at least Sep, according to a new market analysis from travel intelligence platform Mabrian.

The company’s ‘Share of Searches Index’ revealed ongoing and consistent falls in demand from key European markets and the GCC, but mixed signals emerging from Australia.

While demand for the US from Australians has consistently fallen behind 2024 levels dating up to Feb this year, the last week of Apr 2025 saw the first positive shift in 10 weeks, climbing 0.3% to 3.5%.

Mabrian’s analysis said this “moderate recovery” will require monitoring in the weeks ahead.

More broadly, travellers are taking a cautious approach to the US, in line with what it described as “the country’s competitive positioning as a destination”.

Spain versus Airbnb

SPAIN has ordered Airbnb to remove more than 65,000 holiday rental listings in the country for breaching regulations, including missing licence numbers and unclear ownership records.

The move is part of a wider government effort to tackle Spain’s housing crisis, which it believes is made worse by the proliferation of short-term rentals, especially in tourist hotspots like Madrid and Barcelona.

Bali volcano warning

AUSTRALIANS with plans to visit Bali in the coming days are being encouraged to closely monitor travel advice, after Indonesia bumped up the alert level of Mount Lewotobi Laki-laki to its highest tier.

Located on Flores Island, the volcano erupted eight times over the weekend, and while no flights have been cancelled yet, there is a possibility of air travel disruption.

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Virgin gets the jump on Qantas in Apr

ON-TIME arrivals and departure figures across Australia's major airlines surpassed the long-term averages in Apr 2025, according to official data released yesterday.

The government's latest BITRE stats revealed an industry-wide on-time arrivals rate of 82.4% and departure rate of 82.2%, both up on the long-term averages of 80.7% and 81.8% respectively.

Virgin Australia expanded its lead over rival Qantas, setting an 84.4% on-time arrival figure and 84.3% on departures for both metro and regional flying.

Qantas' figures for the month were 82.2% on arrivals and 81.6% on departures across the group.

Cancellations were also lower than the long-term average of 2.2%, with participating carriers shelving only 2% of all services.

"We're incredibly proud to be the most on-time major Australian airline so far in 2025, demonstrating our continued



focus on improving reliability and performance across our domestic network," said VA Chief Operations Officer, Chris Snook.

"In fact, in Apr we achieved our best on-time performance result in more than two years, with 84.4% of flights departing on time - which is testament to the efforts of our whole team," he added.

Virgin Australia also led its red-tailed competitor on scrapped

flights, axing only 0.7% of all services for the month, while Virgin Australia Regional Airlines operated every one of its 165 scheduled services.

Qantas saw a 3.1% cancellation rate on regional services, while mainline operations were axed 2.2% of the time.

Australia's most reliable domestic route was Canberra to Gold Coast, with 93.6% of flights touching down on schedule.

The reverse leg was even more reliable, taking off on time across 95.7% of scheduled flights.

Flights most likely to arrive late were between Rockhampton and Brisbane, with less than seven in 10 services pulling up on time.

Regional carrier Skytrans had the worst operating record for the month, cancelling 166 of its 932 scheduled services to finish Apr with a 17.8% cancellation rate, well behind QantasLink, which axed 3.1% of scheduled flights. *ML*



Window Seat

A TOURIST may be slugged with a \$350,000 fine after an act of stupidity at a popular tourist spot in Spain.

A video posted on social media shows the young male traveller throwing a huge rock into a gorge in the Picos de Europa National Park.

Unfortunately for him, the video went viral and quickly caught the attention of Spanish authorities.

The Civil Guard, who is now investigating the incident, said "disturbing the environment in the Picos de Europa National Park is classed as a very serious offence".

Social media users were outraged by the stunt, pointing out that the rock could have killed a person or animal on the trail below.

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Cheers to 50 years



THE travel industry was out in force last night at Zeta Bar to celebrate Hilton Sydney's 50th milestone birthday.

In front of a packed crowd, emcee and Network 10 news presenter Sandra Sully led the celebrations, hosting a discussion with Alan Watts, President of Asia Pacific, Leonard Gooz, Global Brand Leader, and Area Vice-President APAC & Head of Australasia, Paul Hutton (pictured on stage).

Celebrities made appearances as well, with famous Hilton family member, Paris Hilton, sending a video of congratulations to the local team, while TV chef Curtis Stone mingled with the crowd.

"I'd just like to take a moment to say a major congratulations on 50 iconic years in Australia," Paris Hilton said in her video.

Hutton then took the stage to toast the occasion, stating, "On behalf of myself and my entire team in Australasia, a really

heartfelt thanks for all of your support for this hotel - virtually multi-generational now as we celebrate our 50th year from Mar 1975 when we opened.

"It is incredible to reflect on how far we have come - the Hilton Sydney has been a cornerstone of Australia's hospitality scene and a symbol of Hilton's legacy in the region - it is more than a hotel; it is part of our 106-year history."

The party took place at what was described by the hotelier as "the heart of Hilton's \$40 million renovation", which helped the Hilton brand "meet the needs of today's traveller".

The renovation was described by Hutton as "a bold statement of our commitment to world-class hospitality and to ensuring that Hilton Sydney remains a landmark for decades to come".

In 2025 Hilton will open in its 140th country when all brands are included. *DF*



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Travel Daily
FEATURE

Creating insurance solutions for today - and tomorrow with Gow-Gates Insurance Brokers' Ella Nicholson



THE new Combined Liability Insurance Policy for the travel industry from Gow-Gates provides cover for

both Professional Indemnity and Broadform (Public and Products) Liability. It has been specifically created by Gow-Gates' team of travel industry experts for today's travel agents, tour operators - and the challenges they face.

"We don't want to see travel agents and tour operators uninsured or underinsured by only having public liability cover," said Ella Nicholson, Senior Account Executive for Travel & Tourism at Gow-Gates.

Professional Indemnity (PI) is mandatory in the policy, while Public & Products Liability is optional but highly recommended.

A key point of difference for travel businesses is that the policy is built to suit different business sizes and risk appetites.

"Most policies offer less cover or simply won't quote medium or high-risk activities, but we seek to price the cover to give choice back to our clients," said Nicholson, who has spearheaded this launch.

"We don't reduce the cover just because the risk is higher.

"We look at the whole account, and work closely with underwriters to find a practical, commercial solution."

The Combined Liability Insurance Policy is delivered through a purpose-built and custom-designed online platform, Broker Gateway.

For travel businesses, this means taking out and renewing their insurance is as efficient and as straightforward as possible.

"By upgrading digital technology, the process becomes more efficient and we can deliver time-saving benefits to our clients," said Will MacArthur, Manager of Technology Strategy at Gow-Gates.

"It means that the account managers are better equipped with information to enable them to provide our clients with well-considered personal service and advice," he added.

"Broker Gateway is easy to use, and effectively involves a very simple four-step process from registering an account to choosing your quote.

"And, when it comes to renewing the policy, data is pre-populated so renewing is simple and straightforward."

Gow-Gates' new Combined Liability Insurance Policy is now available, offering worldwide coverage (excluding USA/Canada, negotiable), a low \$500 PI excess to reduce cash flow impact, and is backed by Lloyd's of London underwriters.

To learn more, contact the Gow-Gates Travel Team at travel@gowgates.com.au or call 1300 165 116.



Bonza parent in court

PARENT company of the defunct Bonza airline, 777 Partners, is being sued by financial services company Stripe in the US over the airline's collapse, alleging dodgy dealings by the private investment firm.

Stripe launched legal action against 777 in the this week, with *The Australian* reporting claims the payments company is owed a \$14 million guarantee it was promised in the scenario of Bonza going bust - which it did last year after just 18 months in Australian skies (**TD** 03 Jul 2024).

Around 70,000 fliers were left stranded when Bonza collapsed last year, while Stripe provided the payment processing technology for the airline.

The payments were worth



about \$20 million, according to Stripe, with claims from Aussie pax still flowing as they are not able to cancel their credit card charge until after their scheduled flight was meant to depart.

777 is also facing a US\$350 million suit from other lenders, which allege the company pledged assets it did not own, were already promised to someone else, or did not exist.

Bonza was also at one point being pursued by the Australian Securities & Investment Commission (**TD** 14 Apr) after a report from administrators Hall Chadwick criticised the airline's directors for not acting on its troubled financial situation earlier (**TD** 28 Jun). *MS*

VJ dedicates 50

VIETJET has announced it will transfer up to 50 Boeing 737 aircraft to Vietjet Thailand, bolstering connectivity across the Asia-Pacific region.

The fleet expansion is expected to expand Vietjet Thailand's domestic and international flight network, enhancing links between Australia, Thailand, Vietnam and other key destinations across APAC.

As part of the agreement, Boeing will also provide Vietjet Thailand with comprehensive technical support, including pilot, maintenance and engineer training, and product services.

Hahnair NDC portal

AIR ticketing and distribution partner Hahnair has introduced Distriply One, the first product to draw NDC fare content on its new Distriply by Hahnair brand.

Distriply One allows agents worldwide to access an extensive menu of seat and fare content for up to 350 airlines globally.

The new solution also allows agents to easily manage schedule changes and process refunds.

Passing on Princess

PRINCESS Cruises has paid tribute to *Diamond Princess* Captain Michele Bartolomei, who tragically passed away on board the ship this week after a sudden medical episode.

Diamond Princess was docked in Keelung, Taiwan and was part-way through a 19-day 'Southern Islands Explorer' itinerary visiting Japan, Korea and Taiwan.

Passengers were informed of the Captain's passing over the ship's PA system, with a letter to each room confirming the news.

"Our hearts are with Captain Bartolomei's family during this incredibly difficult time, and we extend our deepest condolences to them," the letter read.

"We also stand in support of the entire *Diamond Princess* crew and all employees across our company who had the honour of working alongside him."

Captain Salvatore Macera has taken control of *Diamond Princess* and the ship is continuing its planned itinerary, which will conclude in Yokohama on Sun.



CLIA LIVE wraps up

CLIA LIVE has just wrapped up its biggest-ever program across six cities in Sydney, briefing advisors of all experience levels about the value of cruise - see today's *Cruise Weekly* for details.

UI-TRI-mate winners


LINKD Tourism has announced the final cohort of winners in its 'UI-TRI-mate' incentive, which will see 10 lucky agents jet off to the USA for a 12-day journey to visit the country's top attractions.

Conducted in partnership with Brand USA and United Airlines, the incentive also saw more than 350 agents tune in to a three-week webinar training series to boost their chances of winning.

Over 500 agents participated in the two-month campaign, with the winning agents named as Brayden Kemble, Ignite Travel; Hayley Lyson, italktravel Sydney; Swapnil Bhate, FC Auckland; Briony Thomas, Tailored Travel and Cruise; Lisa Trestrail, RAA Adelaide; Melanie Sherry, MTA Travel; Nicole Young, Helloworld Burpengary; Jennifer Jones, TravelManagers; Sarah John, Where2travel; and Rachelle Evans, Eastern Hill Travel, Melbourne.

Departing on 01 Jun, winners will be split into two groups, with the first spending three nights in Seattle and Arizona and the second exploring Denver and NY.


The group will then unite in Anaheim to conclude the trip by enjoying Disneyland Resort's 70th anniversary celebrations.



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TC's high-flying agents share the joy

WHEN it comes to celebrating success, few groups salute travel agents' efforts like Travellers Choice - just ask the recipients of the group's annual Choice Reward Trips.

Over the past few weeks, more than two dozen Travellers Choice top-achieving members have boarded charter flights, joined river cruises or hopped on tour buses as part of the Choice Awards program, which recognises travel advisors for their outstanding support of the network's preferred suppliers.

Thanks to the generosity of hosting suppliers, winners this year enjoyed a journey through Slovenia and Croatia with Bunnik Tours, a Mekong River cruise on Emerald Cruises' *Star-Ship Emerald Harmony*, or a trip to Arnhem Land courtesy of Journey Beyond and Outback Spirit Tours.

What's it like to take part in a Choice Reward Trip? After four nights at iconic NT wilderness lodge Seven Spirit Bay, Perth's City Beach Travel & Cruise's Michelle Shea summed it up as follows.

"There's a real sense of joy at being able to experience somewhere so special, and to share the experience with other members of the Travellers Choice family."



AGLOW in the NT wilderness: Phil Dalley, Travel Makers; Michelle Shea, City Beach Travel & Cruise; and Rachel Beaumont-Smith, Journey Beyond.

ANDREW Minto, Home and Afar Travel; Jim Cooper, Queanbeyan City Travel & Cruise; and Nicola Strudwick, Travellers Choice.



CHOICE winners atop Lake Vogel, looking out to Lake Bohinj and the Julian Alps.



KYLEE Graham from James St Cruise & Travel prepares for a Vespa Adventures tour.



TRACEY McCarroll, Ballina Cruise & Travel; Leah Mullen, Tailor Made Travel Mt Gambier; Seven Spirit Bay's Captain Mike; Phil Dalley, Travel Makers; and Cathy Hewett, Tewantin Travel.



ENJOYING flavours of the Mekong onboard *Emerald Harmony*.



CHOICE Award winners soak up the magic of Seven Spirits Bay.



SLOVENIA'S spectacular Postojna Caves.



BEAUTIFUL Lake Bohinj: Christian Hunter, Travellers Choice; Siobhan Da Silva, Capricorn Travel; and Trinity Hastwell, Hastwell Travel & Cruise.



Coffs symposium

THE program for the Australian Event Symposium 2025 has been revealed, and will take place at the Pacific Bay Resort in Coffs Harbour on 14-15 Oct.

The conference will explore key topics facing the events industry, from security and risk to creative programming and future-focused event design, with breakout sessions, panels, and networking opportunities.

Prior to the symposium, delegates can join a pre-event faml showcasing Coffs Harbour, including an in-depth tour of the recently upgraded C.ex Coffs International Stadium.

The Australian Event Awards will then take place on the evening of 15 Oct.

Earlybird rates are available until 01 Sep - [CLICK HERE](#).

ABEA TO GROW ITS INFLUENCE

THE Australian Business Events Association (ABEA) has formed 10 strategic partnerships in under two years, reflecting its leadership as the country's peak body for business events.

The partnerships, alliances and memberships are helping to ensure that the sector's voice is heard at key decision-making forums, ABEA CEO Melissa Brown (**pictured**) believes.

"Advocacy happens at different levels and speeds; however, we first need to be in the room with the right people and places to be considered an important part of the puzzle," she said.

"Our work with the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, as well as Austrade, gives distinction to our important sector, from sister industries such as tourism," Brown added.

ABEA is benefiting directly from



Austrade's research capabilities, as well as closer working relationships with those who inform policy, Brown pointed out.

The ABEA leader also praised the support of Business Events Australia, who she said had "championed us from day one and continue to do so".

The association's other industry partners include Accommodation Australia; Service and Creative Skills Australia; and the Council of Small Business Organisations of Australia (COSBOA), which

enables it to advocate for the thousands of small businesses in the business events sector.

The association also recently announced its tie-up with the International Association of Convention Centres (AIPC), which will see the duo bring educational initiative AIPC Academy to Australia (**TD** 13 Feb).

"Further afield, global associations such as ICCA, AIPC, UFI and IAPCO provide direct links to the latest research, education, trends and insights into our industry," Brown added.

"These partnerships are a reflection on the commitment we have to our members, firmly cementing ABEA as the voice of the industry".

She also made clear that ABEA intends to continue growing its influence, and is already in talks with other organisations. *JM*

IHG event evolution

IHG Hotels & Resorts has launched its first regional MICE campaign this year, 'Evolve Your Event', which offers discounts, triple reward points, and bonus elite night credits.

IHG Business Rewards members can save 10% on the master bill for events booked by 31 Aug and held before 30 Mar 2026 at participating IHG hotels across East Asia and the Pacific.

Also on offer is triple the points for IHG Business Rewards members and more - info [HERE](#).

Cairns on show

THE Cairns Convention Centre is set to showcase its sustainability and facilities on the world stage at IMEX Frankfurt from 31 Jul-01 Aug.

International planners and events professionals can visit stand B290 to meet Wayne Smith, Business Development Director, to hear first-hand about the centre's recent successes following its major \$176 million expansion project (**TD** 24 Oct 2024).

Swanson elected as Chair for BestCities

MELBOURNE Convention Bureau (MCB) CEO Julia Swanson has been appointed as Chairperson for BestCities Global Alliance.

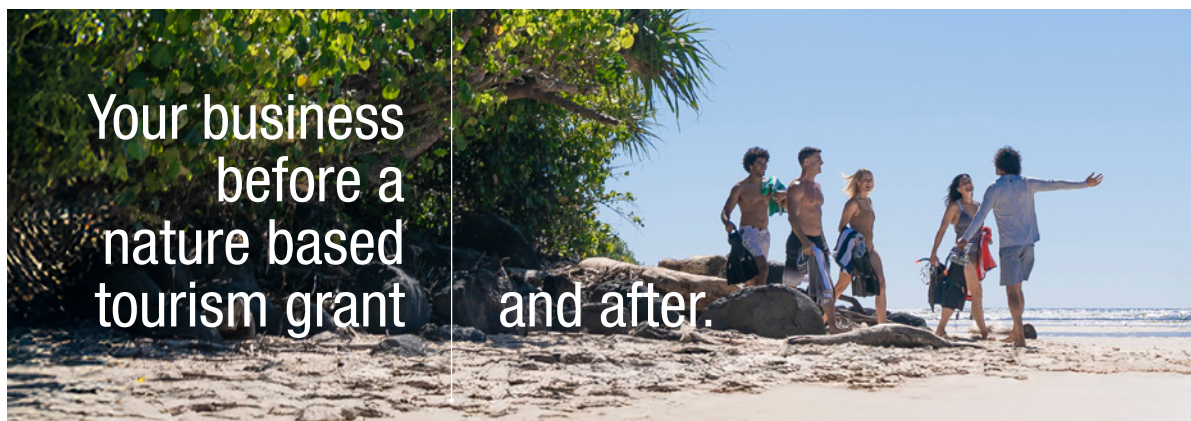
Taking over from outgoing Chair Edward Koh, Swanson (**pictured**) will focus on empowering the convention destination network's members to deliver positive, sustainable events and expand their collective knowledge.

Swanson brings more than 25



years of experience in tourism and business events, including 14 years at MCB.

She was also appointed as Director on the board of the Australian Business Events Association in 2023.



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Abercrombie & Kent co-Chairman **Manfredi Lefebvre** will take charge of the **World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTTC)** as its next standalone Chair. Lefebvre has been a member of the WTTTC for two decades and will lead the organisation in Sep, replacing Certares Management Managing Director Greg O'Hara.

Well-known industry Business Development Manager **Dylan Hearne** has swapped his product hat for a destination hat, taking on the role of BDM at **Linkd Tourism**. In his new role, Hearne will represent brands such as Aqua-Aston Hotels, Alamo Rent-A-Car and The Great American West.

Experienced travel industry professional **Ashleigh Bailey** has joined the team at **Silversea** as its new Sales Manager for Queensland, Western Australia and the Northern Territory. Bailey brings experience with Imagine Cruising and Omniche Holidays to her new role.

Creative agency **Thinkerbell** will say goodbye to its first employee ever, with **Emma O'Leary** leaving to join QT Hotels as its new Head of People. Hailed for her approach to workplace culture, Thinkerbell celebrated O'Leary's contribution to the business by naming its bar after her.

Luxury Travel Collection Global Product Manager, **Shannon Fogarty**, has been appointed to the **National Geographic-Lindblad Expeditions** Travel Advisory Board, representing the Oceania region. Fogarty will guide the expedition brand's market development, also working closely with its Australian GSA, Adventure World.

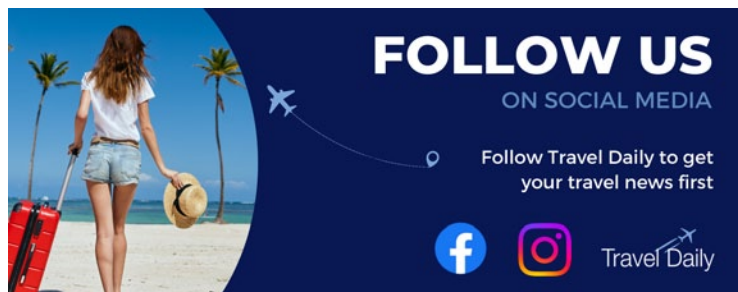
Luxury accommodation brand **Baillie Lodges** has recruited **Courtney Reagan** as its new Chief Commercial Officer. In the newly-created role, Reagan will apply her extensive experiential travel background to lead the joint sales and marketing teams of Baillie Lodges and Tierra Hotels.

Marc Singerling has been promoted from within to become the new Director of Event Delivery at the **International Convention Centre (ICC) Sydney**. His new duties will see Singerling, who has been with ICC Sydney for nine years, put in charge of culinary and event services, reporting to General Manager of Operations, Lynell Peck.

Italian shipbuilder **Fincantieri** has named **Pierroberto Folgiero** as its new Chief Executive Officer and Managing Director.

Jean Philippe Lovotti is the new General Manager at **Ayana Komodo Waecicu Beach** in Indonesia. Lovotti is highly experienced in sustainable tourism and will work to advance the property's green credentials.

Norwegian coastal voyage operator **Hurtigruten** has welcomed **Iain Powell** as its new Chief Commercial Officer. Powell has quickly climbed the ranks at Hurtigruten since starting at the cruise line in Mar 2024, first becoming Vice President of Sales & Marketing UK and EMEA and then Managing Director for Nordics, UK, and Emerging Markets.



Agents return to paradise



NEW Caledonia Tourism recently welcomed a group of Australian travel agents back to its shores to rediscover everything the island nation has to offer visitors.

After a highly damaging and turbulent year in 2024, the group saw the destination back at speed with new hotels and attractions ready to welcome guests.

The agents began their trip on the west coast of New Caledonia with a stay at Sheraton New Caledonia Deva Spa & Golf Resort and a welcome dinner.

A day on Amedee and Master islands allowed the group to visit DoubleTree by Hilton Maitre Island Resort to inspect one of the country's only resorts offering overwater bungalow accommodation, and where some members of the group enjoyed a jet ski ride.

The group was also hosted at Le Meridien Noumea Resort & Spa and Hilton Noumea La Promenade Residences, where

the final night was spent.

Joining the agents on the trip was New Caledonia Tourism rep Rebecca Marchal, who was thrilled to again showcase the country to agents.

"Travel agents play a crucial role in reassuring travellers that it's once again safe to visit New Caledonia and to rediscover the unique charm of the destination," Marchal said.

Further highlights of the trip included a visit to Poe Beach, a glass-bottomed lagoon boat ride and a visit to the Boulouparis Distillery in Noumea. **ML**

Marchal is **pictured** standing to the right behind the group, which comprised Danielle Murray, Flight Centre Mona Vale; Melissa Kolaritsch, Cruise & Travel Store Penrith; Natalie Adamson, itravel Raymond Terrace; Juliana Dark, italktravel & Cruise Maitland; Poppy Kalliopi Galouzis, Fly Me Now Travel; Todd Huggan, Flight Centre Broadway; and Andrew Parchimowicz, Planetdwellers.

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