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## Entire adds group tours

**EXCLUSIVE**

**ENTIRE** Travel Group has today expanded its portfolio to include a new Entire Group Journeys range, promising to "disrupt the escorted touring sector" with guaranteed departures, English-only guides, maximum 24-pax group sizes, four- and five-star hotels, extended stays and prices leading in at \$276 per person/day.

Sales & Marketing Director, Greg McCallum, said trips have "all of the inclusions" as part of a strategic alliance with one of Europe's largest and most respected tour operators.

"We have designed and delivered escorted group journeys that meet the specific needs of Australian travellers... the result is a high-quality coach touring product, offered at exceptionally competitive prices and distributed exclusively

through our new Entire Group Journeys division," he said.

Trips are initially on offer in Spain, Italy, Portugal, France, Morocco and the Greek Islands, with expansion planned into Egypt, Croatia, Turkey & Jordan.

A brochure will launch in Sep but in the meantime agents can quote and book via the Entire website, with the product supported by a dedicated toolkit, phone line and email address - more at [entiretravel.com.au](http://entiretravel.com.au).

## QR means Business

**QATAR** Airways is highlighting its outstanding Business class offering, after being declared the World's Best Business Class for the 10th time by Skytrax World Airline Awards 2023; the airline also took home several other awards - see the **back page**.

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## Hotel prog reminder

**ACCOMMODATION** providers wanting to participate in the NSW Government's domestic hotel program for 2023/25 (**TD** 30 Jun) must lodge their submissions by close of business today at [tenders.nsw.gov.au](http://tenders.nsw.gov.au).

## Today's issue of TD

*Travel Daily* today features seven pages of the latest news including **Business Events News**, and full pages from:

- Silversea
- Qatar Airways

## Resort gets drained

**THE** G'day Group's recently acquired Glen Helen resort (**TD** 27 May 2021) in the NT will temporarily close its doors, citing rising water transportation costs.

The surrounding campground is being closed immediately, which will impact around 400 bookings, while the hotel shuts on 06 Sep.

G'day Group's Chief Operations Manager, Matt Lang, said there is "no clear timeline" for reopening at this stage, but the company continues to have positive discussions with government and other stakeholders around accessing a local bore to support the property's water needs.

Despite already investing more than \$7 million in upgrades to enhance guest experiences, water remains "a key operational hurdle", Lang said, confirming the costs involved ensuring a reliable water supply to the property have become "prohibitively high".

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## O'Neill on board

**FORMER** Tourism NSW CEO John O'Neill and co-founder of digital marketing agency Komosion has been appointed as Chairman of the Board for Destination North Coast.

The regional tourism organisation covers the area between Port Stephens and the Tweed River on the Qld border.

## New London MO

**MANDARIN** Oriental (MO) Hotel Group has announced the planned 2028 opening of its third London property, the Mandarin Oriental Bankside situated on the South Bank of the Thames.

The hotel is part of the larger Bankside Yards development reconnecting the Tate Modern gallery with Blackfriars Station.

The new Mandarin Oriental is expected to have 171 guestrooms and 70 branded residences along with a comprehensive spa, four culinary outlets and more.

## Bali now top destination

**INDONESIA** displaced New Zealand as the most popular international destination for Australian residents in May, according to Australian Bureau of Statistics figures out yesterday.

A total of just over 705,000 short-term trips were recorded - double the figure for May 2022, but still down more than 18% on pre-COVID levels.

Indonesia accounted for 15% of resident returns with 108,000 trips by Aussies during the month, followed by New Zealand with 73,000 and then the USA with just over 57,000.

Thailand came in fourth spot with 41,600 Aussie travellers, just ahead of the UK with 41,400, then Japan (34,450), Fiji (29,910), India (28,830), Singapore (25,140) and finally China (25,020) rounding out the top 10.

May short-term international visitor arrivals to Australia were down 23.3% on pre-pandemic

levels in May 2019, with a total of 512,330 foreign entrants, which was a 120% increase on the same period last year.

New Zealand was the largest source country, comprising 19% of all visitor arrivals with 98,290 trips, followed by the USA with 42,380 and then India at 41,230.

That was just ahead of Singapore with 39,330 and then the recovering Chinese market in fifth spot with 32,310.

Others in the top 10 included the UK, South Korea, Japan, Malaysia and Indonesia.

NSW was the most popular state for international visitor stays during May with about 190,000 arrivals, followed by Victoria with 139,000 and then Queensland which saw 105,000 visitors.

Tasmania recorded the fewest international visitors during the month, with just 3,740, just behind the Northern Territory with 3,860 - full stats [HERE](#).

## Sabre, HRS deal

**SABRE** Corporation has partnered with HRS to enable airlines to offer new self-service options for disrupted passengers.

The integration of HRS Crew & Passenger Solutions with other Sabre offerings gives access to "innovative automation that delivers lodging and financial reimbursement services" to help deal with flight cancellations.

Sabre Travel Solutions Senior VP of Product Management, Corrie De Camp, said it was important for airlines to have options to quickly deal with disruption situations "while converting those service recovery moments into opportunities to enhance passenger loyalty in the future".

## LATAM to Cuba

**LATAM** Peru will resume non-stop flights between Lima and Havana in Cuba, with GDS screens indicating four weekly A320 services effective 29 Oct.

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## Docklands doubles

**CAPITAL** Alliance and TFE Hotels have received planning approval to proceed with a \$340 million dual hotel project in Docklands, Melbourne.

The site at Pearl River Road will host a bespoke 200-key Collection by TFE Hotels brand and the premium 105-room A by Adina, alongside a state-of-the-art conference centre capable of hosting 1,000 people.

The project will include Australia's largest rooftop infinity pool as well as the longest escalator in the country, which will ascend to the conference centre, standing as a centrepiece and featuring the latest in visual projection technology.

"Pearl River is our last blank canvas for Docklands and as such represents a significant milestone," Capital Alliance founder and Chief Executive Mohan Du said.

"We wanted to create something truly remarkable and, in collaboration with TFE Hotels, a precinct that fosters a work, rest, play lifestyle."

Construction is expected to start in the first half of 2024.

## Alliance profit upgrade

**ALLIANCE** Aviation has upgraded its profit guidance for the FY23, with the Queensland-based carrier now anticipating its net profit before tax to be \$56.9 million - up from the \$50 million to \$55 million range that was originally predicted.

In an update posted to the ASX today, the Fly in Fly Out (FIFO) airline said the improved outlook has come about following an increase in operations during the second half of FY23, as additional aircraft were deployed into service under contracted wet lease arrangements.

The profit upgrade coincides with the announcement of a new five-year contract between Alliance and long-term partner Incitec Fertilisers Operation.

The deal will see the airline operate eight weekly services between Townsville and its mine and operations at Phosphate Hill in North-West Queensland.

Alliance MD Scott McMillan said the continuity of the contract, which has been in place since 2002, results from "our superior operational capability, which

is focused on delivering safe, reliable and on-time services".

The carrier said it is now in a strong position to grow its Embraer E190 fleet, which currently stands at 33, and is preparing to take delivery of 30 more of the aircraft from Sep 2023 until Jan 2026 (**TD** 27 Feb).

Four additional E190 airframes, which do not have engines fitted, are also being acquired in Costa Rica next month with a view to utilising spares to enable them to become operational towards the end of the year.

The company will release its full FY23 results post market close on 09 Aug, with today's ASX announcement also detailing a new financing facility arranged by Alliance which allows for up to US\$100 million to be drawn down via private notes over three years to fund working capital and future aircraft settlements.



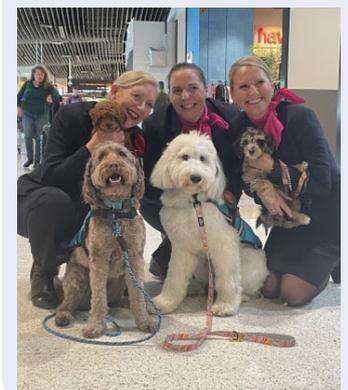
## Window Seat

**THERE** may soon be relief for travellers who have a 'ruff' time with flying, with Brisbane Airport trialling therapy dogs in its Domestic Terminal as a way of helping ease to pre-flight stress for anxious flyers.

The initiative brings the well-trained pups from Therapy and Support Animals Australia into the terminal to offer support of the soft and cuddly variety (the best kind, if you ask us) to nervous passengers.

"We know that airports can be very stressful environments for some people so we're trialling therapy dogs to help reduce anxiety and stress for travellers and of course staff," Trainer Nikki Bignell said.

"Petting a therapy animal releases endorphins making people feel better, diminishing feelings of pain, depression and loneliness."



## Railbookers bonus

**RAILBOOKERS** is offering travel advisors a Visa gift card worth up to \$100 for 2023 bookings as part of its ongoing Flash Sale.

There is inventory available in almost every destination, with the firm noting its flexible, fully-customisable model allowing agents to work with Rail Experts to "craft the perfect holiday to meet their clients' desires" with as little as 24 hours notice - see [railbookers.com.au](http://railbookers.com.au).

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## Porritt steps away

**JONATHON** Porritt will relinquish his position as Chair of Air NZ's Sustainability Panel after nine years in the role.

Sam Mostyn will take over Porritt's position and continue to work with Air NZ to enhance its decarbonisation strategy through improved policies.

"Air New Zealand faces some daunting challenges... to decarbonise...but there has always been a readiness to engage with Air NZ, showing real leadership that is often remarked on by other airlines," Porritt said.

## AC SFO lounge

**AIR** Canada has this week opened a new lounge at San Francisco International Airport.

Located in Terminal 2, the 165-seat space is AC's 28th lounge globally, with further growth later this week with the reintroduction of an AC lounge at Newark Liberty International in New Jersey.

## Marathon runs into Oz

**BOSTON-HEADQUARTERED** Marathon Tours & Travel has formally expanded to the Australian market, opening a local office to entice Aussie travellers to undertake marathon packages around the world.

The sports tour operator offers travel support to many of the world's most famous running events, including long ultramarathons through to quicker half marathon courses.

Travel packages include entry to running events, transport, accommodation, as well as on-the-ground team support, with the company also able to provide bespoke services that combine running events with other leisure holiday attractions.

Marathon Tours & Travel is also offering a new range of domestic packages around the Sydney Marathon, with further "add on" opportunities to enjoy activities in the city such as cruises through

Sydney Harbour and a pre-race dinner with other competitors.

Former Flight Centre Sports and Events Operations and Commercial Manager, Shannon Stacey, is the Director at Marathon Tours & Travel Australia, stating the expansion is an "exciting opportunity" to work with a new team with the shared goal of providing Australia with an industry-leading portfolio of running packages.

"It's great that residents will be able to partake in flagship events across the world and with our help, curate the holiday of a lifetime," he said.

"The Sydney Marathon is something we are also really excited to promote and support through its three-year evaluation process for Abbott World Marathon Majors and the new design of the course."

The Sydney Marathon will take place on 17 Sep.

## Florida loses events

**FLORIDA** is facing a wave of event cancellations, with organisers citing an "unfriendly" political climate and "concerning" new state laws related to gun control, LGBTQIA+ rights, and other controversial issues.

More than 15 conferences have been pulled in recent months, causing the city to lose out on millions in revenue - more business event news on [page six](#).

## Kids free to Japan

**MSC** Cruises is letting kids sail for free on its new 2023/24 winter sailings in Japan, which kick off in Nov with a range of itineraries from Tokyo or Naha operated by *MSC Bellissima*.

Celebrating the 15 years of Japan sailings, kids 17 and under can cruise free, while guests will also enjoy a drinks package (for both adults and kids), and unlimited wi-fi for two devices.

For information, [CLICK HERE](#).



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## EV charge must keep pace

EXCLUSIVE

A SCARCITY of EV charging infrastructure in South Australia may potentially impact caravan tourism in the coming years, according to Caravan Industry Association of Australia General Manager Luke Chippindale.

While acknowledging there has not been much of an impact just yet, he said EVs are becoming more prominent within the drive

tourism sector and so will require supporting infrastructure.

"The coordination, funding and installation of charging infrastructure and its supporting grid infrastructure is of the upmost importance to the industry, without this approach, a \$27 billion-a-year contributor to GDP will be significantly impacted," Chippindale claims.

He added that caravan parks will require major upgrades to increase the number of EV chargers, with "significant consideration" needed by govt as to how electrical supplies are forwarded to parks, many of which only have constrained or minimal supply, threatening tourism numbers to small towns dependent on drive visitation.

Chippindale also noted that while EV campervans are still "in their infancy", demand will spike once future fuel powered vehicles become more readily available.

## Ritz Perth, Mel sale

TWO of Australia's Ritz-Carlton properties have been listed for sale, with Hong Kong's Far East Consortium moving to offload The Ritz-Carlton, Melbourne and The Ritz-Carlton, Perth.

Managed by CBRE Hotels, the sale sees a combined 462 premium hotel rooms up for grabs amid heightened demand for luxury hotel investment opportunities in Australia.

## UA dining diversion

AIRLINE food has had a somewhat less-than-stellar reputation over the years, but most travellers are more focused on the destination than what they get served along the way.

However United Airlines was apparently forced to temporarily divert a transatlantic flight last week after a Business class passenger complained that he didn't get his first meal choice.

The non-stop UA20 service from Houston to Amsterdam made an unscheduled landing in Chicago, circling ORD and jettisoning fuel "due to an unruly passenger", according to *FlightRadar24*.

A fellow flyer posted a video of the irate traveller captioned "unhappy passenger losing his cool over a perceived slight about his meal starts on the flight attendants and then goes on to other passengers".

UA said the diversion occurred due to a "passenger disturbance" *The Guardian* has reported.

## Chaos erupts at TLV

A MASS demonstration outside Israel's Ben Gurion Airport did not affect operations, according to the Israel Airports Authority, who said all scheduled flights departed bar one, due to a technical issue.

However, there were reports of lengthy flight delays and pax missing flights as around 15,000 protestors rallied near Terminal 3.

## W Hungary debut

MARRIOTT Bonvoy has debuted its upscale W Hotels Worldwide brand in Hungary, with the new hotel opening on Andrassy Avenue, the city's most luxurious shopping street.

Housed within the historic Dreschler Palace, the 151 guestrooms and suites feature jewellery-inspired light fittings and touches of Hollywood glam.

Guests can enjoy fresh traditional Asian flavours at Nightingale by Beefbar and sip on cocktails at Society25.

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## ICC CELEBRATES EXTRAORDINAIRES

**INTERNATIONAL** Convention Centre (ICC) Sydney has recently celebrated the outstanding achievements of team members at the Extraordinaires Awards.

The venue received a record-breaking 465 submissions for both permanent and casual staff members, with awards given out across 11 categories.

Recipients included Hannan Lozi and Kathleen Whittaker, who both walked away with a 'Service of Excellence' gong, while Sri Vemulapalli was recognised with the 'Innovation and Creativity' award, and Jessica Zickar scored the title of 'Culture Hero'.

ICC Sydney Chief and ASM Global (APAC) Group Director, Convention Centres, Geoff Donaghy, said the awards reflect the venue's commitment to fostering a positive workplace.

"As a team, we deliver hundreds of exceptional events each year,



the success of which is only possible through the excellence, dedication and positivity of our people," he said.

"We believe that recognising outstanding talent goes a long way in nurturing our strong network of skilled professionals, and it's fantastic to see the team coming together to support and celebrate each other's successes."

**MEANWHILE**, ICC Sydney is gearing up to host South by Southwest (SXSW), marking the first time the event series has been held outside Austin, Texas

since its inception in 1987.

Held from 15-22 Oct, SXSW Sydney 2023 includes a conference featuring over 200 presentations, panels, workshops and mentor sessions, as well as a music and screen festival.

Attendees can also check out the latest tech, entertainment and games from companies across the Asia Pacific at the Tech & Innovation Expo, which takes place alongside a pitch competition for startups and a games festival.

**Pictured:** Winners of the 2023 Extraordinaires Awards.

## Big numbers for Birdsville Bash

**MORE** than 11,000 people descended on the outback town of Birdsville for the 10th Birdsville Big Red Bash, delivering an estimated \$15 million in economic benefit to regional Queensland.

Held over three days last week, the family and dog-friendly festival broke multiple records, including a new World Record for the largest Nutbush City Limits Dance, which saw 5,838 attendees do the boot scoot.

Festival-goers also enjoyed performances by iconic music acts including Hoodoo Gurus, Human Nature, and Pete Murray; dressed up their furry friends for a Doggie Desert Fashion comp; and downed 1,500 curried camel pies and 900 coffees each day!

## MCEC Club adds

**MELBOURNE** Convention and Exhibition Centre's (MCEC) has welcomed several new additions to its Ambassador Program, including Mandy Nicholson, a Wurundjeri-willam artist and community leader.

Also joining the program is Industry Capability Network CEO Dianne Smith, and Prof. Eric Reynolds from the Melbourne Dental School.

## QCB team shuffle

**THE** Queenstown Convention Bureau (QCB) has announced that Sarah McDonald will look after the Australia and US markets, following the departure of Jana Kingston, who leaves the organisation after 18 years.

QCB has also welcomed several new team members, including Tracy Cui as Business Development Manager Asia.

## BCEC's new bites

**BRISBANE** Convention & Exhibition Centre (BCEC) has unveiled 'Seasoned by Queensland', a new menu which showcases the state's best fresh seasonal produce.

Featuring seafood sourced from Hervey Bay and fruit and veggies from the Scenic Rim, the menu offers more choice for organisers, allowing them to assemble and choose their event menus - see it [HERE](#).

## A perfect rebrand

**VICTORIA-BASED** Perfect Events is now a full service agency, rebranding as The Perfect Events Group to reflect its expansion into services beyond event management, including marketing, brand strategy, campaign management and PR.

The rebrand includes a new logo and website (see it [HERE](#)), with CEO Liliana Sanelli saying, "by widening our scope of work, we can offer our clients the end-to-end experience which enables them to elevate their events".

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[appointments@traveldaily.com.au](mailto:appointments@traveldaily.com.au)

**Accommodation Australia (AA)** has appointed **Jenny Lambert** as its inaugural Policy and Research Advisor. Bringing over four decades of similar experience to the current role, the well-respected industry figure will help AA to source new candidates and ease the skills shortage.

**Jennifer Warn** has taken on the role of General Manager, Sales and Distribution at **Ascott Australia** after an almost five-year stint at Quest Apartment Hotels. Most recently she was Group Head of Corporate Sales. Warn is based in the Melbourne office where she will manage all of Ascott Australia's sales and revenue team members.

**Emporium Hotel South Bank** has selected **Hans Palandt** as its new Manager. Palandt brings extensive experience with him to the new role, including time spent at the Buscci Restaurant, Black Hide Treasury & Carl's Newstead (now Ardos). He also possesses an in-depth knowledge in F&B through education at the Wine & Spirit Education Trust.

**Windstar Cruises** has appointed **Janet Bava** to be its new Chief Commercial Officer. She will be responsible for driving strategic growth initiatives, leading marketing, sales, reservations, and deployment teams to further elevate the luxury yacht-style cruise line's position in the global market. Bava was the previously the Chief Marketing Officer at AmaWaterways in California, where she served as a strategic leader across river cruise operations and increased customer engagement.

**Eugenio Pirri** and **Helen Smith** have taken on the newly created role of joint Chief Executive Officer at **Dorchester Collection**. Having worked closely together over the past decade, the pair aim to share their values and diverse skills to drive seamless service to the group's guests and employees. **Christopher Cowdray** has also been appointed as the company's President to better steer the group's development and renovation projects.

Continuing his journey as Area Vice President Operations, **Robert Lowe** has also been appointed as General Manager of **Mandarin Oriental Ritz, Madrid**. He will also oversee operations at Mandarin Oriental's properties in Barcelona, Canouan and Costa Navarino, which are set to open soon. Lowe is described as a result-driven individual and was instrumental in evolving service quality in prior roles.

**Ian Di Tullio** has joined the Bangkok-based **Minor Hotels** as its Chief Commercial Officer. Coming from Accor, Di Tullio occupied an identical role where he had led close to 3,000 hotels ranging from economy to luxury in Europe. With a PhD in Marketing from Cranfield University in the UK, Di Tullio brings knowledge in analytics, customer engagement and digital throughout his extensive experience at Accor, Qatar Airways and Air Canada.

## Golden times in Japan



**JAPAN** National Tourism Organisation (JNTO) recently hosted five Australian tour operators on a 'new Golden Route' through the lesser-known destinations of central Japan in the summer seasons (known as the 'green season' to locals).

The group was brought to the Gifu and Nagano prefectures on a five-night journey to experience the traditional culture, staying at hot springs resorts and World Heritage villages surrounded by hinterlands.

The Aussies were also invited to take on activities such as kayaking on Lake Aoki in Hakyba and a meditation workshop in

Nozawa Onsen, before embarking on a journey to explore the Matsumoto, Karuzawa and Hida Takayama regions.

Sally Miles, JNTO's Business Development & Marketing Manager, wanted to ensure travellers and agents "are aware of the breadth of seasonal experiences across the whole of Japan", adding that "a variety of activities and adventures await throughout the summer period".

**Pictured** enjoying the recent adventure are: Melissa Petrakis, Wendy Wu Tours; Brett Lemish, APT; Clemence Chalot, Insider Journeys; Janene Rubens, MW Tours; and Mark Brooker, itravel.

# The Chat

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