



## Travel Daily ON LOCATION



### GOLD COAST

Today's issue of *TD* is coming to you from the Gold Coast, where the Luxury Travel Collection's Luxury Product Showcase is taking place this weekend.

**THE** Luxury Product Showcase kicked off this morning, with luxury advisors and trade partners gathering at The Langham Gold Coast for two days of product presentations.

Tonight, delegates will have the opportunity to connect at 'A night at the Gallery' presented by Tauck, with the event wrapping up at tomorrow evening's 'Ponant Polar Gala'.

Sun will see many delegates attend the adjacent Luxury Travel & Cruise event at the Gold Coast Convention and

## Virtuoso strikes Treasure

**LUXURY** specialist agent network Virtuoso will welcome Greg Treasure as its new General Manager Australia and New Zealand, with Fiona Dalton set to step down and into a consultancy role (*TD* breaking news).

The leadership change takes effect on 04 Mar, with Dalton moving on after 20 months with the organisation.

Treasure is a highly experienced travel professional, bringing over 30 years in international business travel to his new role, including separate stints with HRG Travel as Managing Director APAC and President of HRG North America.

Among his new duties, Treasure will lead the Australia and New Zealand network, overseeing business planning and the region's financial performance, and be based in the Sydney office.

Elsewhere within the network, Raymond Ang has been named as General Manager, South East and

North Asia.

Ang will join Virtuoso in Apr, bringing extensive experience in the travel sector to his new role.

The restructure will free up Virtuoso's Greater China GM, Irene Lee, to fully focus on development in that region.

Treasure and Ang will report to Virtuoso Vice President of Global Operations, Michael Londregan.

"We deeply appreciate Fiona's impact on the market, and we're excited that her decision to transition to consultancy allows her to spend more time with her family and friends," Londregan commented. *ML*

### Today's issue of *TD*

*Travel Daily* today features eight pages of news including a photo page from **Entire Travel Group**, our **Corporate Update** page, plus a full page from **Titan Travel**.

## Travel Daily ON LOCATION



### CHIAYI

Today's issue of *TD* is coming to you in collaboration with **Taiwan Tourism**, where the destination's peak tourism body is hosting *Travel Daily* for the next week.

**WE'VE** arrived in the city of Chiayi today after taking the high-speed train from Taipei.

Adventures scheduled for today will see us stop at the Dream Forest Ecological Experience first up before some much-needed Dongshan coffee to give us the energy to take in the Water & Fire Cave at Siraya National Scenic Area.

The day's exploration will end at the magnificent Biyun Temple before the group checks into the Reikei Hot Spring Resort in Tainan City.

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## Galleries de Luxe unveiled

**FLIGHT** Centre's The Luxury Travel Collection (LTC) has announced new buying power for its advisors in the form of Galleries de Luxe, revealed at its signature Luxury Product Showcase today.

Inspired by the glamour of the world's famous retail department stores, Galleries de Luxe will offer clients a curated collection of travel products, retailed by the luxury experts that make up LTC.

The 'luxury department store' will be a one-stop-shop for consultants to find the best product for their clients, consisting of seven areas of travel to make up the collection - Hotels de Luxe, Cruises de Luxe, Experiences de Luxe, Grand Tour de Luxe, le Train de Luxe, Prive de Luxe, and Avion de Luxe.

Opening the metaphorical doors to Galleries de Luxe to guests in Qld today, LTC Director of Brand and Marketing, Anna Burgdorf, shared that "LTC members can

shop from our global store of extraordinary products...it will be curated and bespoke, we will have high-end partners and unrivalled experience providers, because that is the client we service".

Galleries de Luxe fills a need in the luxury space, explained global MD Danielle Galloway, "it's really about this missing piece around the one-stop product".

"We know there is a missing piece in terms of signature itineraries and those extra special exclusives that really can make all of our brands stand out in this luxury space," she added. *AP*

### Qantas UK training

**QANTAS** has relaunched its agent training platform in the UK alongside a new local incentive.

British agents who complete six training modules and ticket a Qantas booking by 31 Mar will go into the draw to win return flights to Singapore or Australia.

## Spice Lands of Kerala

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## Perth says G'Day

**TOURISM** Australia has revealed it will bring its G'Day Australia mega trade event to Perth later this year, which will connect around 300 travel agents from around the world with Aussie tourism businesses.

Hosted in partnership with Tourism WA from 13-18 Oct, the event is expected to boost tourism in the state as well as across the country, with agents to participate in a national family program.

"G'day Australia is an opportunity to sell the best Australia has to offer to the world," Federal Minister for Tourism Don Farrell said.

## Kimberley discounts

**DISCOUNTED** travel, airfares and accommodation are on offer for travellers to the Kimberley as part of a WA Govt initiative to support the region following adverse weather events.

The new 'Kimberley Season Pass' offers 50% discounts on select tours and experiences when booked through the Broome and Kununurra Visitors Centre, as well as \$100 off stays at Kimberley holiday parks.

The pass also includes discounted airfares with Nexus Airlines via a new 'Fly a Friend for Free' promotion, giving 50% savings on flights when purchasing two airfares.

Cheaper airfares into Broome and Kununurra are also available with Airnorth - for further information, see [HERE](#).

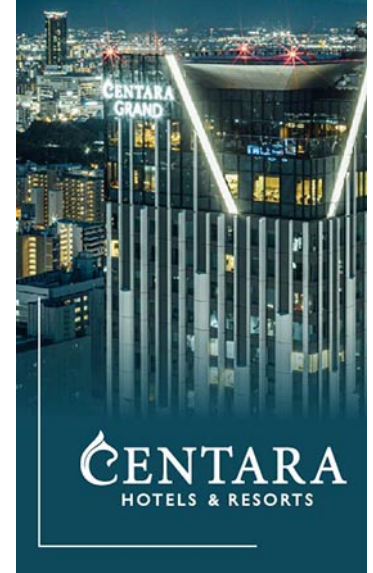
## The Titan of perks

**TITAN** Travel is offering 10% of all 2024 tours when bookings are made by 31 Mar.

Further benefits include 100% guaranteed departure dates, and an extra 5% commission when booking in the promotion period - more details on the [back page](#).

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## Window Seat

ACCORDING to research by YouGov, 2.8 million Australians have watched Netflix while sitting on the toilet.

Armed with this data, Netflix yesterday created the ultimate 'loo with a view' in Sydney by setting up some temporary dunnies themed around some of its most popular shows.

Stationed at Hickson Road Reserve - virtually underneath the Harbour Bridge - the fully functional loos included a *Squid Game* set-up, complete with the spooky Red Light Green Light doll.



The one-day activation also featured an *Emily in Paris* and a *Heartbreak High* toilet scene, each of which are due to debut new seasons in 2024.

## Airlines less tardy in Jan

BONZA has come out on top in the latest monthly report from BITRE, achieving the best on-time domestic arrival performance in Australia for Jan at 78.4%.

Next in line was Rex, who arrived promptly 77.3% of the time, followed closely by Qantas (76.6%), while Jetstar, Virgin and Skytrans lagged behind at 71.5%, 67.9% and 65.4%, respectively.

Looking at the bigger picture, the overall on-time performance is creeping closer to the long-term average of 81.6%, with Jan's figure hitting 76.7% - a noteworthy uplift on Dec's 71%.

The latest figures told a similar story for the overall cancellation rate, with Australia's airlines collectively improving that figure from 5% in Dec to 3.1% in Jan, bringing the carriers much closer to the long-term average of 2.2%.

Bonza saw the biggest improvement on its cancellation rate, which shrunk from 19.4% in Dec 2023 to just 3.3% in Jan.

Bonza CEO, Tim Jordan, said the results were proof that his carrier had "learnt and vastly improved from our Dec 2023 cancellations



and OTP", which he pointed out "mostly arose from the well publicised delays in receiving regulatory approval related to aircraft operating out of our new Gold Coast base".

Meanwhile, Virgin Australia racked up the poorest cancellation figure of all the major carriers at 5.3% - albeit an upgrade on the prior month's 7.5% - while Skytrans was at the bottom of the rung at 15.4%. JM

## NJE wins Gladstone

REX subsidiary National Jet Express (NJE) has won a contract to service weekly charter flights between Brisbane and Gladstone.

The agreement will support Air Charter Service in flying workers in and out of mining projects in the Queensland city.

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## Bhutan lowers fees

BHUTAN'S Department of Tourism has announced a simplification of its visa process, with visitors now able to apply via one online form.

The South Asian country has also reduced its Sustainable Development Fee (SDF) again, which is now US\$100 per adult per night (TD 23 Jun 2023).

In a bid to boost its Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions (MICE) sector, event planners have been advised by Bhutan they can now apply for an SDF waiver, subject to certain conditions, at least one month prior to the event.

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## EY unveils new Diamond

ETIHAD has announced the introduction of a new elite Diamond tier to its loyalty program in a bid to better reward its most regular flyers.

Coming into effect from Jun, the new Diamond tier will be made available to Platinum members of Etihad Guest who have spent over US\$150,000 on flights during a 12-month period, with benefits including the option to redeem miles for upgrades to The Residence Cabin.

Another benefit for Diamond members will be the opportunity to choose their own vanity membership numbers.

“Diamond recognises the airline’s top flyers with experiences that truly go beyond,” Etihad Guest Managing Director Mark Potter said.

However, the revamp of the Etihad loyalty program does not stop there, with the Middle Eastern carrier also revealing reduced pricing for its GuestSeats and fewer miles required to

book select destinations in both economy and business class.

Under the impending changes, Abu Dhabi to London in economy will require 2,000 fewer miles to book (now 30,000), however loyalty members will still earn the same amount of miles.

Alongside the core benefits, tiered members will also be able to select from a range of custom benefits to suit their lifestyles, with specifics to be detailed closer to the Jun launch date.

Silver members will get a choice of two custom benefits, Gold will get four and Platinum five. *AB*

## WTAAA APAC power

THE World Travel Agents Associations Alliance (WTAAA) has announced the Federation of ASEAN Travel Associations (FATA) as its newest member.

The addition of FATA, which represents over 7,700 agents across the 10 ASEAN countries, will mean WTAAA’s presence in the Asia-Pacific region is significantly boosted.

“By combining our resources and collective expertise, we can advocate more effectively for the interests of agencies serving the diverse region,” WTAAA Executive Director Otto de Vries said.

“Together, we will raise and advocate for beneficial industry standards, develop new opportunities, and promote global collaboration that drives success for our members at both local and global levels.”

## TNZ hatches off-peak plan



OFF the back of a successful summer that saw increased spend and arrivals, Tourism NZ is now investing greater efforts to attract tourists all year round, CEO Rene de Monchy told *TD* during Tourism NZ’s annual regional showcase in Sydney.

“Now that travel...is back in New Zealand, Australia’s about 82% of what it was in terms of airline capacity,” he said, adding incremental spend was also up 105% after inflation.

The long-haul markets, particularly from North America, have also been “really strong”, while Chinese travellers are starting to make a return too.

However, de Monchy admitted that New Zealand is quite a seasonal market, which will soon be reflected in the industry in the coming month.

“In the next few weeks, you will start to see the airline capacity drop off a little bit and less visitors coming into the country.

“So the focus for us going forward is very much about how

we make NZ an enticing place year-round & not just a summer destination,” de Monchy said.

Twenty-three diverse regions were represented during the Sydney showcase, where travel partners were offered the most up-to-date info about the newest tourist hotspots.

As de Monchy indicated, Australia is New Zealand’s only major short-haul market and unlike other overseas travellers, Aussies often book multiple trips throughout the year for an average of 11 days each.

Self-drive holidays are particularly popular with Aussies. “Fundamentally, New Zealand is a touring destination and we want people to get out and get in a camper van or a car and really explore,” said de Monchy.

“One of the things that NZ has to offer, which is a real asset, is a great variety of different places and landscapes that are all quite accessible.” *JH-M*

**Pictured:** De Monchy meeting with partners in Sydney.

## Aussie visas popular

AUSTRALIAN visas are among the most in-demand in the world, a study from financial services provider Remitly has found.

Visas for Australia rank as the fourth most sought after globally, following analysis of search volumes for 103 countries.

Only visas from France, Canada, and Japan are more in demand than Australia, with India rounding out the top five.

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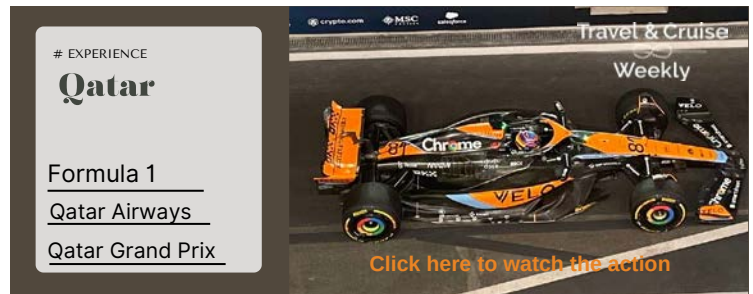
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## AFR launches *Highflyer*

The *Australian Financial Review* has launched *Highflyer*, a new annual "aspirational" travel supplement headed up by the masthead's well-known Travel Editor, Fiona Carruthers.

The first issue was published today inside the Mar edition of *AFR Magazine*, as well as on afr.com, and curates a "one-stop-shop" guide to the front end of the plane for the Aussie market.

High-profile scribe Joe Aston has joined the new venture as a guest columnist, having garnered much attention as the author of the hugely popular AFR column 'Rear Window', until his resignation in Oct last year.

In the first issue, Aston writes about how travellers can survive landing at LAX or Heathrow, and also shares his tips for where to eat, stay and dine in Los Angeles, a city he knows well having lived there for several years, as well



as London, a city he continues to visit regularly.

Nine Publishing's head of luxury, Amanda Upton, said she was confident the new venture would find its mark with travellers.

"From a commercial standpoint as soon as Fiona proposed the idea I knew it would be an outstanding success," Upton said.

"Knowing how well airline content resonates with our audience, there is an insatiable appetite for content about the pointy end of aviation and this magazine and digital collection will not disappoint." AB

## AC promotes Pineda

AIR Canada has promoted Eunica Pineda to Marketing & Online Sales Manager.

Based in Sydney, Pineda has been with the carrier since Apr 2018 and was most recently the Sales and Marketing Specialist for the North American airline.

## German air solution

THE Board of Airline Representatives in Germany (BARIG) has enlisted tech start-up, Layover Solutions, to help coordinate services for travellers in the event of air disruptions.

The airline association will use the company's AI-supported B2B online platform, which connects airlines, hotel operators, transportation service providers, and pax, allowing both airline staff and customers to respond more quickly to issues.

## FTA needs more lift, Elf argues



ANY Free Trade Agreement (FTA) brokered between Australia and the UAE must examine ways to increase air capacity to fully leverage the benefits, Flight Centre Global Corporate COO, Melissa Elf, believes.

While talks about establishing a Free Trade deal are still ongoing, Elf said there is an "incredible opportunity" for the travel sector if air lift is able to be addressed.

"Data from our flagship corporate brands, FCM Travel and Corporate Traveller, shows demand for travel into the UAE has grown by 38% year-on-year, but capacity is lagging - so we're behind where we need to be [for a successful FTA]," Elf argued.

"Flights into the UAE from Australia are 77% of what they were pre-pandemic - that's among the lowest outbound capacity figures we're seeing and far below Australia's average int'l outbound rate of 98%."

Elf also noted that Aussies travelling through the Middle East to get to Europe would see the flow-on effects of lower airfares if more capacity was added.

While two years ago, the majority of business travel between Australia and the UAE was in the education and sport sectors, more recently that has shifted to gas/oil, with Elf bullish on the trickle-down benefits of the trend for travel. AB

## Crooked celebrates

CROOKED Compass is celebrating a decade of operations this year with the launch of an exclusive Founder's Tour, designed by the company's creator, Lisa Pagotto.

The never-to-be-repeated itinerary will explore the best of Mongolia and Kazakhstan, and will be hosted by Pagotto herself.

Priced from \$14,646 per person, the 16-day 'Mongolia's Golden Eagle Festival & Kazakhstan' adventure is scheduled to depart on 11 Sep 2025 - find out the full trip details [HERE](#).

## JetBlue ups charges

LOW-COST US carrier JetBlue has hiked its checked luggage fees for domestic flights by US\$10, raising the overall first checked bags price to US\$35.

The changes have now gone live and according to a spokesperson from the airline, were prompted by increased wages, higher fuel costs, and inflationary pressures.

## Kimberley in bloom

TRAVELLERS can enjoy up to 30% savings on Coral Expeditions' 2024 Kimberley waterfall season departures, which kick off 05 Apr on the *Coral Adventurer*.

The 10-night itinerary will run 20 times across three vessels between Apr-Jun, giving guests the opportunity to see the region "in full flow and bloom".

Prices start from \$9,000pp.

Travel Daily

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## Entire Travel Group rocks on at Soirees

WITH the possible exception of a certain US singer's concerts, the hottest tickets in town this month were for Entire Travel Group's inaugural Travel Showcase and Soirees.

The three sold-out events offered a rare chance for some talented individuals - in this case 37 world-class exhibitors - to strut their stuff and an appreciative audience of more than 650 agents seized the opportunity to sharpen their travel skills before immersing themselves in music, food and dance.

Managing Director, Brad McDonnell, said the success of the Showcase and Soirees shows Entire's relationship with its retail partners has never been stronger.

"Our aim is to use our experience and our relationships with trusted suppliers to provide an unrivalled service," McDonnell said.

"Ultimately, we want to help travel agents look like rock stars in front of their clients - and judging by the feedback, it's clearly working," he added.

Those who missed out on this year's events can save the following dates for 2025: 01 Feb, Brisbane; 12 Feb, Melbourne; and 13 Feb, Sydney - learn more about this year's events [HERE](#).



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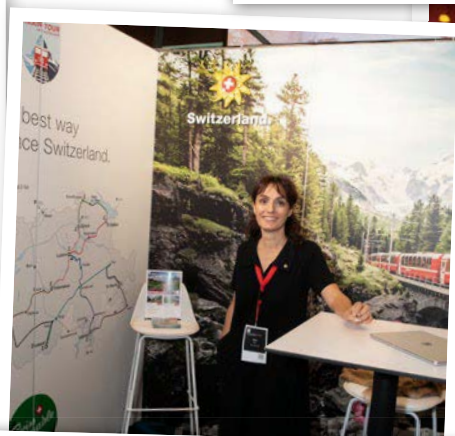
AIR Canada's Zoe Gentle leads the Sydney conga line.



FLIGHT Centre's Marina Wood and Bec Johnson.



ITRAVEL'S Dee Jaswal and Joe Karbo.



SANDRA Babey from Switzerland Tourism.



CRAIG McLaurin, NCL and Julie Rogers, Ponant.



CAROLINE Brunel from New Caledonia Tourism.

## CORPORATE UPDATE

### AMTC, BTA band together

**THE** Australian-based Association of Travel Management Companies (ATMC) has forged a new alliance with Britain's Business Travel Association (BTA), with the goal of better advocating for the interests of their members and business travellers.

With a diverse membership and network of industry partners, BTA's membership accounts for over 90% of UK expenditure on managed business travel.

The two organisations will work together to overcome shared challenges, collaborate on new initiatives, and represent the interests of the travel management companies within their respective markets.

"The BTA's unique understanding of the UK and Europe market,



coupled with our combined expertise, unlocks immense potential for shaping a better global travel community and experience for those we serve," TMC Chair, Tass Messinis, said.

Clive Wratten, CEO of BTA, said "joining forces with ATMC is a crucial step towards a more coordinated and strategic approach for travel management companies worldwide". JM

### China travel trends

**CHINA'S** economic slowdown is expected to impact corporate travel, according to a new report from BCD Travel.

The *Emerging Travel Trends in China* paper predicts companies will tighten their corporate travel budgets this year, with a focus on optimising a trip's return on investment, choosing low-cost carriers for air travel, and revising travel policies to accommodate extra days for leisure as 'bleisure' stays gain traction in China.

The report also identified a rise in data-driven travel management, with more Chinese companies using predictive analytics, machine learning and AI to fine-tune corporate travel programs, simplify expense tracking and forecast disruptions.

### GlobalStar grows

**GLOBALSTAR** Travel Management has expanded its network with the addition of Belgium-based Triton Travel as its latest partner.

"Like every GlobalStar partner, Triton brings intimate knowledge of its local market together with a reputation for meticulous service, agility and flexibility," GlobalStar CEO James Stevenson shared.

Triton Travel MD, Danny Vanderghinste, said joining the worldwide travel management organisation will allow Triton's clients to benefit from "greater supplier deals, technology and the knowledge that exists in the GlobalStar network".

The Chat

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### Visit USA celebrates rebound



**VISIT USA** concluded its annual three-day expo and networking event in Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane this week.

The events were attended by leading travel agents and more than 260 suppliers, as well as special guest, ATIA Chief Executive Officer Dean Long.

Exhibitors included Expedia, I Love NY, Disneyland, Caesars Entertainment, Hawaiian Airlines, Visit Memphis, Royal Caribbean, Tauck and plenty more, with Visit USA Australia President, Caroline Davidson, hailing increased Australian visitors to the States.

"The speed at which travel to the USA has rebounded pleasantly surprised us all.

"Australian travellers to the USA in 2023 exceeded the National Travel and Tourism Office forecast by 10%, with 935,000 visitors and being the fourth-largest percentage increase in the top

ten markets," she noted.

"The demand is evident, and it is with thanks to the people here with us today.

"Destinations, suppliers, travel media - we are stronger together and the result speaks for itself," she added.

During the event, US Consul General for NSW and Qld, Christine Elder, announced the launch of new pilot program, One-Stop (TD 22 Feb).

The initiative will allow Australian travellers to the United States to transition to an onward domestic destination and bypass security screening in the connecting airport - potentially saving hours in travel time.

The first route will run from Sydney to San Francisco. JH-M

**Pictured:** ATIA chief Dean Long soaking up the US flair in Sydney with Visit USA Australia President Caroline Davidson.



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Savings of up to \$800 per couple on select itineraries are available with **Railbookers'** latest offering. Travellers can save up to the listed amount on its 20-day Wonders of Peru and The Andean Explorer, the Galapagos Islands on board Yacht *Isabela II*, and more. Discounts of up to \$600 per couple are also available on tour locations such as Luxerne, Zermatt, and St Moritz. Call 1300 938 534 to learn more.

Available for entries made by 29 Feb, **Sydney Airport** is offering a cheaper prices for car parking at the hub's domestic P3 carpark. Deals include \$99 for three days and \$169 for seven days. The offer is valid for bookings until 25 Feb for the first 400 spaces each day. More T&Cs apply - **CLICK HERE** to secure your space.

**AirAsia** has launched its first big sale promotion for 2024, offering international fares from Australia to hundreds of destinations in Asia from just \$129. Fly from Perth to Jakarta, Bali, and Kuala Lumpur from the lowest price listed, while flights from Sydney to Bangkok or Kuala Lumpur are priced at just \$269 one-way. The low-cost carrier is also offering airfares within Asia from as low as \$10 - learn more **HERE**.

Enjoy up to 15% off on Eurail Passes when you make your booking with **Rail Europe** between 20 Feb and 12 Mar. The discount applies to most passes except for Germany and Scandinavia Pass products, as well as some Eurail France Passes. Terms and conditions apply - learn more about the offer by **CLICKING HERE**.

**Jetstar** has launched a mega sale with discounted prices on more than 250,000 fares, starting from \$29. A flight from Melbourne (Tullamarine) to the Sunshine Coast will only set travellers back \$29, while the lowest overseas fare is priced at \$138 from Perth to Bali (Denpasar). The Takeoff More Sale is valid until 11.59pm AEDT on 24 Feb, unless sold out prior. Call 13 15 38 to make your booking.

Discover Tasmania with **Rex's** latest promotion, where travellers can score a one-way ticket from Melbourne to Hobart from only \$99. Ending on 26 Feb, the carrier is also offering checked baggage capacity and refreshments on board. Book your flight **HERE**.

**Viking's** Deal of the Week is back with a special listed price from \$10,495 per person on the 15-day Iceland, British Isles & Iberia voyage from Reykjavik to Barcelona or vice versa. Receive up to \$3,000 flight credit per couple on 2025 and 2026 ocean voyages when sailors make their bookings before 24 Mar. Contact Viking on 13 87 47 to learn more.

Save up to \$3,000 per couple on the Vietnam & Cambodia Highlights tour with **APT** when you book before 31 Mar. Travellers will explore the Angkor Archaeological Park and bustling streets of Ho Chi Minh and Phnom Penh, as well as enjoy luxury dining with a total of 31 meals while cruising across the 13-day itinerary. Call on 1300 278 278 for more.

## Don't make us the scapegoat



**SYDNEY** must "learn from the mistakes in New York and not follow them", were the cautionary words from Airbnb, prompted by the NSW Government's move to reevaluate short-term rental accommodation rules (**TD 15 Feb**).

Michael Crosby, Airbnb Australia and New Zealand's Head of Public Policy, said the Big Apple's rental market "remains rotten" four months after implementing "the most restrictive short-term rental rules in the world".

In a statement recently published on Airbnb's website, Crosby pointed out that New York's rental prices increased by 2.3% year-on-year in Dec, while its rental availability dropped by 3.6% since Aug 2023.

As well as failing to provide relief for the city's renters, the new restrictions are also acting as a deterrent for visitors.

A recent Airbnb survey showed 65% of respondents are less likely to visit NY due to recent increases in hotel prices, and 54% are more likely to book short-term stays through unregulated platforms.

Crosby argued that New York City's model must not be replicated in Sydney, and said to do so would ignore the key factors that are driving current housing affordability issues.

"Introducing harsher short-term rental regulation will not fix the housing crisis; instead, it will cost travellers more, diminish host earnings amid a cost-of-living crisis, adversely impact small businesses that rely on tourism, and ultimately give people less choice," he said.

In his statement, Crosby highlighted results from a new Urbis study, which found that short-term rentals have a minimal impact on housing affordability.

The data showed short-term rentals where the host doesn't reside on the property comprise just 1.8% of overall housing supply - the lowest since 2016.

Crosby also emphasised Airbnb's \$4.4 billion contribution to gross state product in NSW for the year up until Mar 2023, based on estimations from Oxford Economics. *JM*



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