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Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today features 10 pages of the latest industry news including our **Sustainability** page, plus a full page from **Silversea**.

\$29 Celestyal tickets

CELESTYAL is offering cruises for the crazy price of just \$29pp, per night, as part of a newly unveiled leap year promotion.

The one-day only deal takes place on 29 Feb and applies to select cruises departing between Mar and Oct this year.

Sailings featured in the promotion include departures in the Aegean and Ionian Seas.

The price also includes \$110pp shore excursion discount.

Resilient pulls out

VIRGIN Voyages has sensationally made the decision to withdraw *Resilient Lady* from its upcoming Australian deployment in 2024/25.

The cruise line cited concerns about potential escalations in the Red Sea over the next 12 months as the reason - read the full story in today's **Cruise Weekly**.

FCTG's independence day

FLIGHT Centre Travel Group Global Leisure CEO, James Kavanagh, said he's aiming for the new independent brand Envoyage (**TD** breaking news) to become "a global powerhouse" and the most recognised independent travel brand in the market.

"Independent travel has been one of the fastest growing



divisions for us in recent years," Kavanagh explained.

Aimed squarely at independent agents, FCTG said Envoyage will eventually branch out into dedicated extensions focusing on corporate and luxury travel.

FCTG Independent will begin Envoyage's global rollout from next month, with the USA first to welcome the brand.

This will be followed throughout the year by Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa.

FCTG Global MD of Luxury and Independent Brands, Danielle Galloway, said Envoyage's brand proposition is "compelling, memorable, versatile and conjures a sense of aspiration."

"Being part of Envoyage will offer agents the best of both worlds - the freedom of running their own business their way, coupled with the power of a truly global brand and community." ML

Qantas price pledge

TRAVEL agents can now lock the price of Qantas airfares booked via the Qantas Distribution Platform for up to five days under the airline's new price guarantee.

Qantas said its new Price Guarantee Ticketing Time Limit policy has been introduced in response to agent feedback, making it the only airline in Australia to offer a price lock on NDC content.

The feature removes the need for agents to reprice bookings ahead of ticketing.

The guarantee policy will automatically apply on all bookings made through one of Qantas' Certified Technology Partners.



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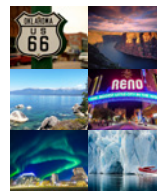
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MEL parking project

WORK has begun on Stage 2 of Naarm Way at Melbourne Airport, which will provide a direct access road between the Tullamarine Freeway and new pick-up and drop-off zones at T123 carparks.

Construction will result in a temporary closure of 2,000 car spaces, but Melbourne Airport said the project will see significant reductions in traffic congestion, with an estimated 70,000 fewer cars taken off Terminal Drive each day.

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20

[VIEW THE TOURS!](#)

Warwick Blacker mourned

THE Australian travel industry is mourning the death of former Jetset Travelworld, Consolidated Travel, Qantas and Thai Airways executive Warwick Blacker.

Blacker (**pictured**) died suddenly last Fri, two days short of his 78th birthday, after suffering a brain aneurysm, having also battled cancer for several years prior.

The industry legend retired over a decade ago, stepping down from Jetset Travelworld (**TD** 11 Nov 2011) and the board of the Australian Federation of Travel Agents (**TD** 10 Jan 2012) after a stellar career.

He was highly respected as a true gentleman, always ready to offer a word of kindness or advice to anyone in his orbit.

Blacker started his career in aviation, spending more than 15 years with Thai Airways before joining Qantas as Manager Passenger Sales Australia in the late 1980s, and then taking other QF roles including Regional GM Japan and as GM of the then Joint Services Agreement between Qantas and British Airways.

He then joined Consolidated Travel as Head of Business



Development, working closely with owner Spiros Alysandratos including acting as his alternate director on the AFTA board.

Blacker became GM of Jetset Travelworld in 2009, later transitioning to a senior advisory role with the organisation, which ultimately became Helloworld Travel Limited.

He retired to a farm on the outskirts of Sydney, and is survived by his wife Jane and two sons, with tributes on social media recognising his ever-smiling face, friendship, love of horses and generosity. *BP*

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TTC Great Escaper

TTC Tour Brands is inviting agents and their clients to an exclusive advanced screening of *The Great Escaper* starring Michael Caine & Glenda Jackson.

The VIP events will take place on 05 Mar in Melbourne (**RSVP HERE**) and Brisbane (**HERE**), and on 06 Mar in Canberra (**HERE**) and Sydney (**HERE**).

Attendees can score exclusive discounts across TTC's brands as well as a brief update on how to find the perfect itinerary.

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Pamela Goldsbro
LUXE by itravel QLD

“itravel is small enough to provide great support but big enough to have industry impact. I love that the leadership team is always accessible”

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THE PLACE TO BE IN OSAKA

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Centara Grand Hotel Osaka

New gateway to China

INTERNATIONAL travel marketing company AVIAREPS has launched a new B2B travel platform called SmoothTravel, serving as a gateway to better engage with travel companies located in east China.

Created in consultation with the Shanghai Municipal Government, the new platform aims to help travel companies from around the world with improved access to inbound and outbound Chinese travel agencies, tour wholesalers, online travel agencies, as well as and MICE agents.

AVIAREPS said SmoothTravel

is designed for all segments of the travel industry, including destination marketers, tour operators, hotel groups, retailers, attractions, rental car agencies, and cruise lines.

Key features of the platform include 'China Partner' search functionality, allowing users to quickly identify new inbound or outbound China travel trade partners via introductions using highly qualified criteria.

SmoothTravel also addresses differences in payment practices, offers bilingual mediation system to resolve disputes, a travel insurance program for Chinese members, as well as the latest research on China's consumer preferences and industry trends.

Further benefits include a two-way training platform and tailored market research to meet individual business needs.

For more information, visit www.smoothtravel.com. AB

The Chat is back

THE Chat with Jenny podcast has returned after a summer break, starring Uniworld Boutique River Cruises Managing Director Alice Ager as the latest guest.

Listen to the new episode **HERE**, and stay tuned for more to come.

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EK heads Skywards

EMIRATES and flydubai's loyalty program, Emirates Skywards, has partnered with Visa to enhance its co-branded card portfolio across the GCC, which will boost member benefits and miles earning opportunities.

The multi-year strategic partnership will strengthen collaboration between Emirates Skywards and co-brand issuer partners across the Gulf region, allowing the program to work more closely with its partners on personalisation and data-driven decision-making.

Additionally, the program's members will enjoy personalised rewards, as well as enhanced travel opportunities.

Emirates Skywards Divisional Senior Vice President, Nejjib Ben Khedher, said the landmark agreement will "unlock incremental value for our loyal members across the GCC and will tighten our collaboration with our banking partners in the region".

ALISHAN

Today's issue of *TD* is coming to you courtesy of Taiwan Tourism which is hosting us in Taiwan this week.

IT'S the final day of our tour in Taiwan and it starts at the luxurious Hotel Indigo at the top of the mountains in Alishan, watching the sun rise before heading off to try out the art of traditional tie dying.

After that the group is off to the airport via Flower Home Farm in Miaoli County, famed for its amazing flower collections, including sunflower, lavender, rose and taro, among many other floral varieties.

The journey in the fascinating Asian destination concludes in the China Airlines lounge as we wait for C151 back to Sydney.

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Titan preps Europe

TITAN Travel is preparing to introduce its European 2025 program at the end of Mar, which includes an expanded range of 'European Stay & Explore' tours across destinations like Austria, Tuscany, Greece, and Spain.

New adventures include 'The Essence of Tuscany - A Classic Touring Holiday'; 'Contrasts of Valencia'; 'Memories of Mallorca'; 'Captivating Norway'; & 'Lakeside Austria', to name just a few.

Elsewhere in the world, Titan has also delivered new tours to Cambodia, Nepal, and Georgia in Asia, as well as an expanded range in New Zealand.

Volcano sentencing

SENTENCING hearings for the tour booking agents involved in the deadly White Island eruption in 2019 (**TD** 10 Dec 2019) have started in New Zealand this week.

White Island Tours, Volcanic Air Safaris, Kahu New Zealand and Aerius, as well as the corporate owner of the once popular tourism island, Whakaari Management Limited, are being sentenced on one criminal charge of insufficiently ensuring the safety of workers and visitors.

Each charge carries a maximum fine of NZ\$1.5 million (A\$1.4 million), with the court to hear victim impact statements from families of the dead and injured - which included 24 Australians.

The judge is set to hand down the amount of the penalty within the next week.

Visit Anaheim's brewed crew



ANAHEIM has a lot on the boil at the moment, from major sporting events in coming years through to developments which will shape the city for the years and decades to come.

Ahead of the Visit USA roadshow last week, the annual delegation from Visit Anaheim invited 25 of its partners from wholesale, retail and media to a special coffee appreciation class, along with a hearty brekkie.

Held at St. Ali Coffee Roasters in South Melbourne, the event also featured a series of short presentations on some of the major developments in Anaheim and what travellers will love most.

Among these were a number of hotel updates, including the recently transformed Pixar Place Hotel at Disneyland (**TD** 02 Feb) and the return of Pixar Fest, on again for the first time since 2018.

Still at Disneyland, an expansion project known as Disneyland Forward is in the works along with the City of Anaheim which

will shape the legendary theme park for the decades to come.

Progress was also shared on an exciting new waterfront dining and entertainment precinct known as OCVICE coming to Anaheim, which will present a new hotspot for visitors to explore from its opening in 2026.

In attendance at the breakfast was Visit Anaheim Senior Vice President of Sales & Services, Ronnie Collins, who shared detail about an extensive sport calendar coming up for the city.

Visit Anaheim's Australian rep, Michael Cassis, said it is little surprise Anaheim has one of the longest average stays across the mainland USA.

"But much like Disneyland Resort, which continues to grow and evolve, Anaheim itself is constantly changing, offering more than ever to all traveller types," Cassis said. *ML*

The happy coffee appreciators are **pictured** above with the Visit Anaheim touring delegation.

Window Seat

INDIAN Railways has ordered an investigation after a freight train (**pictured**) loaded with gravel travelled 70 kilometres without a driver on board.

Around 50 carriages set off on the unscheduled solo jaunt for no determined reason over the weekend, careering on the tracks from the northern state of Jammu and Kashmir all the way to Punjab.


Thankfully, nobody was injured on the mystery ride, with safety workers placing wooden blocks on the tracks to slow the locomotive down to a relieving stop.

Perhaps not surprisingly, the train was captured on video and promptly posted to social media where it went viral.

Local media reports also suggest the train reached alarming speeds of over 100km per hour, leading all road crossings on its 'route' to be closed to prevent the prospect of a deadly collision.

India is lamentably no stranger to rail incidents, with the government investing large sums of money in recent years to upgrade electronic signalling systems.






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Airlines grounding women

AIRLINES have been exposed as perpetuating some of the worst gender pay gaps in the country, new figures released by the Workplace Gender Equality Agency have revealed.

While the median base salary gender pay gap across all private companies in the country was found to be 14.5%, all of the major Aussie carriers presented gender pay gaps well in excess of the national average.

The worst offender was Qantas subsidiary Jetstar, which has a median base salary pay gap of 53.5%, followed by Virgin Australia with 41.7%, Qantas (39.3%), and Rex (25%).

In response to the damning findings, Qantas said it has a raft of measures in place to close the gap, including the target of employing 42% of women in senior management roles by Jun.

Further initiatives include providing more internal

development paths for women, and clamping down more strongly on sexual harassment.

The wide gap between men's and women's pay in aviation has been driven by men dominating historically better paid roles such as pilots and engineers, Qantas noted, while women are overrepresented among the more lowly remunerated cabin crew.

Elsewhere in the travel sector the picture was much brighter, with Flight Centre presenting a median base salary gender pay gap of 16.8%, very close to rival Helloworld, which was shown to have a gap of 17%.

For tour operators, the report showed Intrepid had a median base gender gap of 21.5%, while The Travel Corporation delivered an excellent result of just 3.4%.

Accor performed equally as well, delivering a 3.4% gender pay gap between men and women.

Access the full report [HERE](#). **AB**

itravel adds three new faces



ITRAVEL welcomed three new independent mobile travel agents to its network this month, with the new additions tapping in to a range of innovative new products rolled out across the network.

"February has been our busiest start to a year with new agents joining which is encouraging," said itravel Chief Operating Officer, Joe Karbo.

Among the new chargers is Chris Pain (pictured left) from Western Australia, who made the move to itravel from another home-based organisation after eight years.

Another new face in the itravel family is Jade Garlick (pictured centre) from Sydney, who has branched out into her own home-based operation.

Another NSW recruit is Anthony Samaha (pictured right), who also brings many years of experience and knowledge to the network.

The three new itravel agents come onboard during a strong period for the company.

"Q1 bookings are also our biggest ever, currently up 24% year-on-year across air, land and cruise," Karbo added.

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Here's the scoop: To throw your hat in the ring, simply book a Return International Philippine Airlines ticket to Manila between February 26th and March 17th, 2024. Want more shots at winning? Book any Philippine Airlines domestic ticket to Cebu or Boracay and double your chances to win one of the 8 golden spots up for grabs!

Secure your spot in the race for adventure by shooting an email over to famil@philippineairlines.com.au with your ticket/PNR details. We'll reach out to the winners on March 31st, 2024!

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ATIC relaunches platform

THE Australian Tourism Industry Council (ATIC) has relaunched its online business development platform, the Quality Tourism Framework (QTF), which has been enhanced to support the growth of the country's visitor economy. Now offering an improved

user-friendly experience, the revamped platform allows tourism operators to enrol in programs that align with their business needs, including sustainability, accessibility, risk management, and more.

The new-look interface and updated streamlined processes also mean users have access to a range of resources to support their ongoing achievements, as well as making it easier to track progress, develop new product experiences, and better tap into new markets.

The QTF's redevelopment was made possible through \$8 million in funding from the Federal Government as part of its THRIVE 2030 strategy, aiming for the long-term sustainable growth of the country's tourism industry.

The cash injection, which is being delivered over four years, will boost ATIC's suite of programs that assist small and regional tourism businesses to provide quality, sustainable tourism experiences.

Federal Minister for Trade and Tourism, Don Farrell, said the new platform is an important step in the wider upgrade of the Quality Tourism Framework.

"Small and medium tourism businesses and their staff, including those in regional areas, work incredibly hard to deliver great visitor experiences and an enhanced QTF will help them boost their capability and respond to consumer needs." JM

Broome cruise opp

THE Federal Government has given the nod for efforts by border agencies to continue on the requirements to secure expanded first point of entry status for WA's Port of Broome.

This could potentially support cruise ships to travel directly to the tourist city from overseas destinations, which WA Tourism Minister, Rita Saffioti, said will "have a major positive impact in Broome and the surrounding Kimberley region".

Cruise Lines International Association MD, Joel Katz, also welcomed the decision, saying "this work is essential to support cruise ships travelling directly to Broome from overseas destinations...and for cruise ships to be able to visit the Kimberley region as they leave Australia".

Kimberley Ports Authority will now work with other agencies including Australian Border Force on the design and development of security infrastructure and a resourcing plan to facilitate international vessels and cargo arriving in Broome.

More details in **Cruise Weekly**.

TIME's sunset gathering



MORE than 30 people from all facets of the travel industry turned out for TIME Melbourne's first networking event of 2024, which was hosted by The Travel Corporation (TTC) on the rooftop of its office last week.

Attendees, which included a number of people new to TIME as well as mentors, graduates and current mentees, soaked up the sunshine of the warm summer afternoon as they enjoyed refreshing beverages and views over Albert Park Lake.

Guest speaker for the evening and General Manager of Magellan Travel, Iain Summers, (pictured inset), regaled guests with stories of his career journey, from his early days at Thomas Cook in Scotland through to his current role and the mentors and advice he had along the way.



"It's so exciting to see the Melbourne travel community gathering together to talk about the importance of mentoring and the opportunity TIME provides," said Ingrid Berthelsen, Evolution Travel Collective co-founder and Managing Director, and TIME Vic State Representative.

"We are looking forward to our next event already and hope to welcome even more of the Melbourne travel industry along," she added. JM

Pictured: Troy Ackerman, AAT Kings; Sarah Pierson, TTC; and Mylinda Joyce, TTC.

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To celebrate Avalon Waterways setting sail in Bordeaux next year, we're giving away a French goodie bag filled with wine, L'Occitane products and more.

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SIA expands PER lounge



AirAsia's ambitions

AIRASIA has revealed plans to launch the world's first low-cost network carrier, spanning not only Asia but also Europe, the United States and Africa.

The growth strategy was unveiled during a recent visit to the airline's head office in Malaysia by Christian Scherer, the new CEO of Airbus' Commercial Aircraft business, with the two businesses marking a two-decade-plus partnership.

The carrier will resume its Airbus A321neo deliveries starting Jun in line with strong forecast demand, with the new narrow-body aircraft set to replace its A320 aircraft over the coming years and fuel expansion.

AirAsia is also looking to grow its medium- to long-haul network to Europe, Africa, and North America, according to Tony Fernandes, the CEO of the airline's parent company, Capital A.

SINGAPORE Airlines has opened its new SilverKris Lounge at Perth International Airport, now offering more space, enhanced facilities and new dining options (**TD** 07 Jun 2023).

The venue, which was unveiled yesterday by Anil Kumar Nayar, Singapore's High Commissioner to Australia, is twice the size of the previous lounge in Perth, boasting the ability to accommodate around 135 guests.

Featuring SIA's 'Home Away from Home' design concept, the lounge comprises a larger buffet area inclusive of a live cooking station and full-serviced bar, as well as shower rooms, productivity pods, and wingback chairs for relaxation.

The opening of the SilverKris Lounge, which is centrally located in the International Departures terminal, arrives ahead of the resumption of SIA's four daily flights from Perth to Singapore from 31 Mar. *JM*

ATIA UPDATE

from LJ Loch, Director of Comms



IMAGINE having your business profiled in mainstream media. Imagine being quoted as the travel specialist you are

in the country's biggest media outlets. Well, that's exactly why we started ATIA's media roster.

Each and every week we are getting the names and expertise of our ATAS travel professionals out there in some of the most influential and most consumed Aussie media outlets, in newspapers, on radio, on the internet and even TV.

Importantly our roster isn't just about promoting our members' businesses but it's also about helping everyone understand the nuts and bolts of travel and the role our members play in making travel as seamless as possible.

It's about clearing up any questions people might have and boosting trust in the value of travel professionals.

We have a weekly calendar of key areas we focus on which

we actively pitch to newsrooms across the country.

We also have multiple opportunities each week to piggyback on trending media issues to promote the value of our ATAS businesses.

It's yet another benefit we're so proud to provide our ATIA members. Being featured promotes members and reinforces the importance of choosing an ATAS business each and every time you book travel.

It's yet another way ATIA is delighted to add value for members while reinforcing the 'amazingness' that exists across the travel sector in this country.

Week after week, we are so proud to share the incredible work that our members do by amplifying their voices in the channels that matter.

For ATAS businesses looking to amplify their voice and reach, joining ATIA's media roster is a strategic move.

It's an opportunity to be part of a collective force, shaping narratives and influencing perceptions in the travel industry.

Help us spread the word of the power of ATAS - join the roster!

Vic to get boosted

THE 2024 Formula 1 Australian Grand Prix is expected to draw an even bigger crowd than last year's record-breaking turn-out, providing an "epic boost" for Victoria's economy.

More than 45,000 Grandstand seats at Melbourne's Albert Park will be filled with visitors from across Victoria, interstate and overseas from 21-24 Mar to see the world's best drivers face off.

The 2023 event generated \$268m for Vic's economy.

Ferrera joins Chimu

POLAR and Latin American specialists Chimu Adventures has welcomed destination specialist Valentina Ferrera to the team, where she will be based in the brand's Sydney office.

Ferrera joins from the South American team at Adventure World Travel where she also provided booking support at AAT Kings Australia.

The cruise exec said the role has a special place in her heart because she was born in Chile.

Two exciting opportunities are now available with specialist travel agency and tour operator, Back Track Adventures.

Celebrating our 40th anniversary this year, we're looking for a Reservations Agent to join our Tour Operations team and a Client & Reservations Agent to support our retail travel consultants. Both roles are based in our Brisbane city-fringe office.



If providing exceptional customer service without the pressure of sales targets sounds like your dream role, email leanne@backtrack.com.au to learn more!





FAA MOVES TO CLEAN UP US SKIES

BOEING and Airbus will be required to develop and install improved fuel-efficient technology on a variety of aircraft under new carbon pollution rules to be introduced by the US Federal Aviation Administration (FAA).

Aircraft manufactured after 01 Jan 2028 flying in US airspace will be required to comply, along with subsonic jets and large turboprop planes not yet certified.

Examples of jets required to meet the new standard include the Boeing 777X, 787 Dreamliner models and the Airbus A330neo, ATR72 if built after this deadline.

According to the FAA, these aircraft models alone make up 9% of domestic air transport traffic and 2% of total carbon pollution levels in the Continental US.

Qantas currently holds purchase rights for 12 Boeing Dreamliner



aircraft as part of a fleet renewal order placed last year (**TD** 24 Aug 2023) which would see the new FAA rule apply on aircraft built after the cutoff date.

The new rule comes as part of the US Aviation Climate Action Plan that sets out steps for the US aviation industry to reach goals of

net-zero emissions by 2050.

“We are taking a large step forward to ensure the manufacture of more fuel-efficient airplanes, reduce carbon pollution, and reach our goal of net-zero emissions by 2050,” said FAA Administrator, Mike Whitaker. *ML*

Ponant preserves

THE Ponant Foundation has signed a three-year funding commitment with the Macquarie Island Conservation Foundation to preserve the island’s natural and heritage survival.

The annual pledge marks the organisation’s first funding commitment in the Australasia region and will run until Jun 2026.

The project works to ensure the natural and heritage survival of Macquarie Island, located around 1,500km southeast of Tasmania or halfway between New Zealand and Antarctica.

Macquarie Island is home to more than 3.5 million breeding seabirds and one-seventh of the world’s elephant seals.

Rapid Russia rail

RUSSIA will construct a new high-speed railway line between St Petersburg and Moscow in a project backed by President Vladimir Putin.

The proposed link will cut the existing travel time between the two cities by nearly half, from four hours to two hours and 15 minutes.

Inspired by Japan’s famous Bullet Trains, the new rail link aims to operate every 10-15 minutes during peak periods on the high-traffic route.

Cathay Cargo ramps up plastic recycling

CATHAY Pacific’s cargo division has increased its commitment to using recycled plastic cover sheets, with the new standard now seeing 50% of all exports using recycled plastic.

Rolling out from next month, the improved specification is a jump from the previous 30% standard, with the new material having been extensively tested across real-world trial shipments.

“The circular economy is an important concept to

reduce waste and prolong product lifecycles,” said Cathay Subsidiaries Head of Sustainable Development, Michelle Fok.

“Our cargo terminal has implemented circularity in cargo plastic sheets since 2017 and is already recycling 100% of plastic sheets from import cargo shipments, which are broken down at the Cathay Cargo Terminal.”

The sheets use 50% post-consumer plastic, reducing the reliance on virgin plastic.

AMSL Aero funds

ZERO-EMISSION aircraft manufacturer AMSL Aero has welcomed a \$3 million funding grant from the Federal Government to back the development of its bushfire fighting vehicle.

Funds will be used to develop a remotely piloted version of its Vertia vertical take-off and landing craft to assist fire crews to battle blazes overnight and to test the aircraft’s capabilities in regional Australia.

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LTC basks in weekend of luxury

THE Luxury Travel Collection hosted the 10th Luxury Product Showcase at The Langham Gold Coast over the weekend. Previously hosted under the purple banner of Travel Associates, this year the prestigious event also included members of the recently launched Luxury Travel Collection (**TD** 04 Dec 2023). The two-day product showcase saw over 200 luxury travel advisors and 60 suppliers present.

Networking was also high on the agenda, with two nights of extravagant celebrations presented by showcase platinum sponsors Tauck and Ponant.

On Fri night, Tauck took delegates on an artistic journey through 'A

Night at the Gallery', while Sat evening's Ponant Polar Party saw guests dine in a winter wonderland, complete with a live tree in the centre of the ballroom.



THE Ponant and LTC teams celebrating in style at the stunning Ponant Polar Party.



TRAVEL Associates' GM Rachel Kingswell kicked off the exclusive showcase.

"WE'RE coming to the Ponant Polar Party!" Ponant's Julie Rogers and Deb Corbett confirm their RSVPs.



TTC'S Toni Ambler and Tomas Malmberg with LTC's Danielle and Rachel.



TAUCK'S David Clark with LTC's Danielle Galloway at 'A Night at the Gallery'.



REGENT Seven Seas Cruise's Scott Graham and Oceania's James Sitter were showcasing their luxury cruises.

LTC'S Michelle Keatinge, Shannon Fogarty, Danielle Galloway, Rachel Kingswell, and Anna Burgdorf.



ENJOYING Tauck's 'A Night at the Gallery'.



THE Luxury Travel Collection and Travel Associates team.



"HELLO Tanya's Travel Tuesday's speaking!" - Tanya von Konigsmark from Evans & Turner Travel Associates.



MONEY

WELCOME to Money, TD's Tue feature on what the Australian dollar is doing.

AU\$1 = US\$0.654

THE Australian dollar saw little movement on Mon's trading session, putting a stop to its winning streak - not a huge surprise according to the lack of economic announcements to keep things moving.

China's economy continues to look flat, which is also heavily influencing the Australian dollar's stagnancy and failing to give traders much to be excited about.

Wholesale rates this morning.

US	\$0.654
UK	£0.516
NZ	\$1.059
Euro	€0.603
Japan	¥98.53
Thailand	฿23.49
China	¥4.706
South Africa	12.62
Canada	\$0.883
Crude oil	US\$81.62

Resort Tava'e opens

A NEW resort has opened on the Cook Islands to offer a retreat for visitors, blending modern comfort with Polynesian charm.

Positioned on the shores of Aitutaki, Resort Tava'e features 16 poolside rooms, five beachfront rooms and three two-bedroom suites, each with a private balcony overlooking the ocean.

A restaurant with a beachfront dining area will also open in the resort in May, with the menu to include traditional island fare.

Ambassador arrives in Australia



HA gains first 787

HAWAIIAN Airlines has officially welcomed its first Boeing 787-9, which arrived in Honolulu from South Carolina last week.

More than 1,500 of the carrier's employees, as well as leaders from both Boeing and Hawaiian Airlines, joined in the festivities which included a special blessing ceremony and guided tours of the new aircraft.

Named Kapuahi, the aircraft will debut on 15 Apr when it begins operating the carrier's nonstop, daily Honolulu-San Francisco service together with an additional 787, due to join the fleet next month.

Hawaiian Airlines expects to have a total of three of its 12 787-9s by the end of 2024.



AMBASSADOR Cruise Line has sailed into Australian waters for the first time, with *Ambience* docking in Sydney on Sat as part of her inaugural Grand Round the World Cruise.

The epic voyage, which departed London on 06 Jan and is set to visit six continents, 24 countries and 34 ports of calls, will also stop at Melbourne, Adelaide and Fremantle.

Guests will have the opportunity to experience some of Australia's most iconic sights and cities before departing the country on 03 Mar to continue on the global journey.

The British cruise line's Head of Sales & Marketing AU and NZ, Dean Brazier, labelled the ship's arrival as "an exciting milestone" for Ambassador, which will offer four itineraries from Sydney and one from Fremantle.

Ambience can cater for 1,400 guests across 798 cabins, and boasts five restaurants, nine lounges, a swimming pool, a spa, day and evening entertainment, fitness and leisure facilities, complemented by enrichment and lifestyle programs. *JM*

APT sells a third

MURRAY River Paddlesteamers and APT have announced one-third of sailings for their luxury riverboat, *PS Australian Star*, have already been filled 15 months ahead of the vessel's launch (*TD* 16 Feb).

As a charter partner, APT has secured 16 seven-night sailings from Jun 2025, when *PS Australian Star* makes her debut on the Murray River, to early 2026 - equivalent to a third of all departures for the five-star boat's first year of operations.

"The APT charters, coupled with strong, general early bookings, garner well for the success of *Australian Star* from 2025," Murray River Paddlesteamers Director, Craig Burgess, said.

"It's clear our exciting new vessel will prove incredibly popular and successful, drawing more visitors from around Australia and overseas as well as lucrative tour group business."

QF pax's pricey typo

QANTAS has faced backlash after forcing a customer to fork out \$1,900 to fix a spelling mistake on his flight booking, including a \$300 cancellation fee and a \$1,600 difference in fare price.

Chris Bowers was told by the airline that he would need to cancel and rebook his nephew's flight from Japan to Brisbane last Nov, after he misspelt his name.

The disgruntled customer made a complaint to Qantas before contacting the Airline Customer Advocate, who said it had no power to take any action.

After being contacted by the media, Qantas offered Bowers a \$1,600 travel voucher.

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