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Today's issue of TD
Travel Daily today features six pages of the latest travel industry news, a cover wrap from **Tourism New Zealand**, plus a special update from **FCTG's Envoyage**, our **Luxury** page, and a full page from **Infinity Holidays**.

Complaints rise 9%

DELAYS, cancellations, refunds and lost baggage made up the majority of the 1,408 complaints received by the Airline Customer Advocate (ACA) in 2023.

According to the ACA's latest full-year report, the number of legitimate complaints received was up 9% year-on-year, while the resolve rate fell by 6% to 37%.

The complaint finalisation time frame improved throughout the year, dropping from 37 days to 19 by the second half of 2023.

While complaints were turned around faster, only 520 (37%) were marked as resolved, which means the outcome was accepted by the customer.

The ACA is funded by Qantas, Virgin, Jetstar and Rex and serves as a complaints intermediary between airlines and passengers.

Win a WA getaway

INFINITY Holidays is giving away two great prizes for agents, including a three-night stay at the Smiths Beach Resort in Yallingup, as well as a \$500 travel voucher - see **p7** to find out how to win.

Qantas ad hoc lounges

QANTAS customers can now access the carrier's 30 branded lounges using a new 28-day subscription model.

Responding to customer feedback, the airline said the new ad hoc style lounge tier called Qantas Club Flexible creates a viable alternative to annual

membership for flyers who want greater freedom in purchasing.

The new monthly rolling option can be cancelled at any time up until three days prior to renewal, and will provide most of the same benefits that a 12-month membership provides.

The biggest difference with Qantas Club Flexible is that customers don't have access to lounges through partner airlines, nor are they allowed to invite a guest along for lounge visits.

Japan's Disney wish

DISNEY will bring year-round cruises to Japan from early 2029, as part of a new deal with Oriental Land Co (OLC), which owns and operates Tokyo Disney Resort.

Under the agreement, OLC will build and operate a Disney-branded cruise business in Japan, with a new Disney Wish-class ship to be constructed at Meyer Werft shipyard in Germany.

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

Qantas customers taking up the ad hoc membership will also not have the option to buy an annual gift card to bring an extra guest.

The price will cost members \$99 a month in addition to a \$129 start-up charge, with customers able to avoid paying the joining fee each time they subscribe so long as they renew within 90 days of the first time they signed up.

Qantas has released the new lounge tier four months after increasing annual membership by 17%, with prices jumping from \$699 to \$849 for new members and climbing from \$540 to \$629 for renewals (**TD** 19 Mar). **AB**

Cleaner Copenhagen

COPENHAGEN has announced it will begin rewarding tourists with free food and activities if they participate in environmentally-friendly tasks while visiting the city.

The trial phase of the 'CopenPay' scheme will kick off on 15 Jul, with visitors able to claim free lunches, coffees, glasses of wine and kayak rental when they engage in activities such as litter-picking, travelling by public transport or biking around the city.

Lonely now lovely?

EVER wondered what makes an effective marketing campaign? Sister publication **travelBulletin** has the experts on the case to pull over a new novel campaign push from an underpopulated European city - read more **HERE**.

Go your own way

APPLICATIONS are open for Tourism New Zealand's Explore New Zealand Discount Program, which gives approved travel sellers access to cheaper flights, accommodation and experiences.

See the **cover page** for details.



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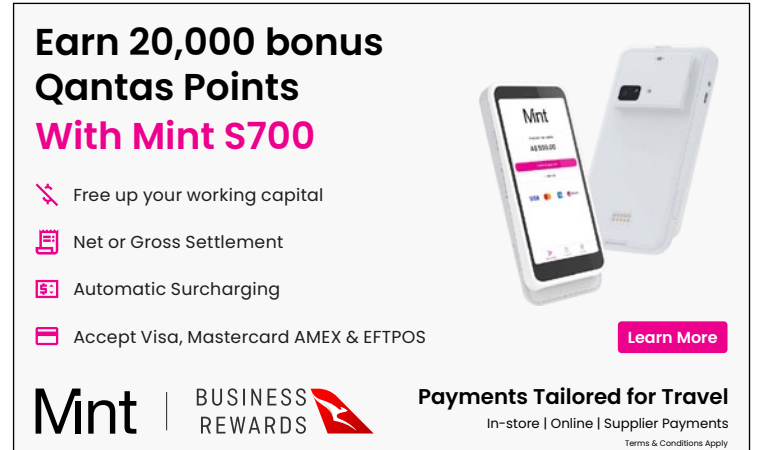
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Bill not a silver bullet: TWU

FINANCIAL protections for airline pax cannot be achieved without first addressing “the significant decline” in service standards, the Transport Workers Union (TWU) has warned.

In a new submission to the Federal Government’s *Airline Passenger Protections (Pay on Delay) Bill*, the TWU said declining standards, made more obvious during the pandemic, have been systematically eroded over the past 15 years.

Echoing similar sentiments from its submission to the government’s more comprehensive Aviation White Paper due out in coming months, the TWU said the illegal outsourcing and dismantling of a secure job framework by Qantas had led to severe understaffing - decimating reliability.

The submission reiterated long-trumpeted calls by the union for the establishment of a Safe and Secure Skies Commission which would oversee safety standards for passengers and staff, workforce and supply chain managements, dispute resolution and much more.



“Passengers and aviation workers in Australia will continue to see poor outcomes without proper regulatory oversight, regardless of whether there are measures to compensate for delays or cancellations,” the TWU submission reads.

The *Pay on Delay Bill*, if passed, would create an Aviation Code of Conduct forcing airlines to adhere to prescribed standards of service in the event of a flight cancellation or major delay.

These standards would legislate restitutions including food, water, accommodation and financial compensation for affected pax.

Airlines and representatives for the sector claim Australian Consumer Law already covers guaranteed rights for pax. *ML*

Cruise360 sold out

TICKETS to Cruise360 Australasia 2024 have now sold out, with more than 800 travel agents and cruise industry representatives set to attend the Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA) conference.

Taking place on 30 Aug at the International Convention Centre (ICC) Sydney, the event will also include the association’s biggest-ever trade show, as well as its first River Cruise Showcase, which has also sold out.

“Our travel agent community has shown a huge hunger for industry insight and professional development,” CLIA Director of Membership & Events in Australasia Marita Nasic said.

Full program details and speakers are expected to be revealed in the coming days.



Ponant sees stars

WHETHER en route to Antarctica or in the middle of the Caribbean, Ponant guests will now have access to complimentary wi-fi wherever they are in the world, thanks to the new addition of Starlink.

“With Starlink, our guests enjoy high-speed wi-fi access even in the most remote regions of the planet,” Ponant Chief Guest Experience & Product Officer, Benoit Carassou-Maillan, said.

The line’s *Le Commandant Charcot* was the first vessel to test Starlink antennas at the geographic North Pole.

Barron back in action

A **LIMITED** operating window is now available for thrill seekers to experience rafting on the Barron River in North Queensland with Cairns Adventure Group.

Rafting trips on the waterway are open until 31 Aug following the river’s seven-month closure due to damage sustained from last year’s Cyclone Jasper disaster.

The reopening is a collaboration between CleanCo Queensland and Cairns Regional Council, with strict safety measures in place.



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Int'l traffic booms

INTERNATIONAL passenger numbers passing through Australia's airports ballooned by nearly 10 million extra travellers for the year ending Apr 2024, new BITRE data out today reveals.

Traffic numbers on scheduled flights for the 12-month period saw 38.4 million travellers board overseas flights, up from 27.1 million a year earlier.

For the month of Apr, seat availability failed to keep up with demand however, sending average load factors up to 80.4%.

Qantas and Jetstar increased its market share in Apr to 29.6%, up from 28.9% one year earlier, with Virgin Australia taking its share among local airlines to 32.7%.

Singapore Airlines again held third place for passengers carried, accounting for 9.5% of the market.

NSW gears up for cruise



DESTINATION NSW wrapped up its Cruise Ready Workshop series last week after hosting sessions in Eden, Newcastle and Sydney.

More than 180 visitor economy stakeholders attended the key cruise events, where they heard from the Destination NSW Product Development team and cruise industry experts about shore excursion opportunities at & around the state's cruise ports.

The full-day workshops focused on maximising bookable experiences, including learning about the cruise distribution network, markets and demographics; how to create cruise shore excursions; as well as informing attendees about Destination NSW's cruise resources and support.

"Destination NSW is committed to investing in industry resources

that help NSW visitor economy businesses create world-class shore experiences for cruise passengers," Destination NSW Acting CEO, Ian Maltman, said.

"Cruising injected more than \$2.7 billion into the Premier State in the 2022-23 financial year, and plays a vital role in driving visitor economy growth," he shared.

According to data from Cruise Lines International Association, each domestic cruise passenger spends on average \$197 per day while they are in port.

Eden, NSW's largest regional port on the far south coast, marked a record-breaking summer season for 2023/24, with a 20% growth in cruise ship arrivals compared to the previous year, generating around \$19 million into the region's visitor economy. *JM*

Amora's new GMs

AMORA Hotels & Resorts has this week hired two new general managers in Australia, with Rob Unson leading Amora Hotel Brisbane and Rahul Dangwal taking the helm of Amora Hotel Riverwalk Melbourne.

Unson has enjoyed a 30-year-career in the hotel sector, including for hotel operators such as TFE Hotels and Accor.

Meanwhile, Daghul has held leadership roles at companies like Stamford, TFE Hotels, and Accor.

"We are confident that Rob and Rahul will both play pivotal roles in driving our hotels forward," Amora Director of Hotels & Resorts, Earp Siriphattrawan, said.

"Their combined expertise and dedication to excellence will strengthen [our] commitment to excellent hospitality."

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Content produced in collaboration with Envoyage Group



Envoyage launches consumer brand

LEADING independent travel network Envoyage has today announced the signing of its first-ever shopfronts, marking a significant milestone in rolling out its new consumer-facing brand.

After Envoyage launched to the Australian industry in May, the development signals its commitment to expanding its reach within the travel industry and broadening its offering to its advisors and agencies.

Envoyage General Manager Nick Queale said while the location of the new shopfronts can't yet be revealed, they will be an exciting addition to the suite of products and services the brand can offer its network.

"These new shopfronts will

give our network yet another way to tap into the power of our brand, this time in a way that will become easily identifiable to and trusted by consumers.

"The response to the rebranding of our independent travel arm to Envoyage has been overwhelmingly positive, and it's incredibly exciting to see it come

to life across actual bricks-and-mortar sites.

"The shopfronts form a key part of our robust marketing strategy. They're going to create impact and drive interest and engagement from customers, which at the end of the day, is the most important thing to our members."

Envoyage National Sales Director

Fiona Batten said the move to offering shopfronts was important because many customers value being able to walk into a store and book their holiday in person.

"We are excited to work with our new partners on growing their businesses and building out this new segment in our thriving new network."

Fostering connection

ENVOYAGE thrives on creating opportunities for travel advisors and agencies to collaborate within its global network, which truly comes to life through the brand's unparalleled calendar of global events.

The brand's flagship event, Worldwide, is a global conference held in a different location each year.

After a successful inaugural event in Santiago, Chile this year, Worldwide 2025 will be hosted at Sun City, South Africa.

Worldwide 2025 brings together over 300 travel professionals to explore new products and forge greater global connections.

Icons is another key event that rewards the brand's high achievers with a luxury holiday.

Last year, Icons was held aboard a luxury European river cruise and this November, it will take those who qualify to the Maldives in recognition of their dedication and success.

But it doesn't stop there.

Envoyage also hosts enviable EOFY and Christmas celebrations and organises planning days at the Brisbane head office.

These important gatherings foster better teamwork, innovation, and continuous engagement, strengthening the vibrant community.

Customer satisfaction soars

FOLLOWING a significant review and the introduction of new initiatives, Envoyage has seen its Net Promoter Score (NPS) skyrocket by 10 points this year.

The result highlights the company's dedication to providing exceptional support and resources for its members and the investment in its rebrand.

Envoyage General Manager Nick Queale credits the success to Zoran Panzich's appointment as Key Account Manager.

"Zoran has a deep understanding of what our members need to be successful, so in this role, he's made changes that have significantly improved

the way our advisors operate.

"Our members are our biggest advocates, so to see their experience reflected in our NPS score shows that we're on the right track."

Panzich said his role has focused heavily on nurturing relationships and offering further support through a considered account management strategy.

"We are committed to our members' success, and our enhanced strategy is tailored to meet their unique needs.

"By offering personalised support and dedicated resources, we aim to foster long-term growth and satisfaction within our community."

ENVOYAGE

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LUXPERIENCE SET ON STAYING SMALL AND NICHE

EXCLUSIVE

ORGANISERS of specialist ultra-luxury roadshow Luxperience say it has no plans to return to a mass-market strategy, and will instead focus on catering to the elite elements of global travel.

Speaking to *Travel Daily*, Luxperience Event Director Lynn Ormiston said the strategy for the show has pivoted following its acquisition by Flight Centre Travel Group last year (**TD** 14 Nov 2023).

"Luxperience before and Luxperience now has definitely changed," Ormiston stressed.

"We want to make sure that the meetings are mutual and that the suppliers who are attending the show are of interest to buyers."

Where in years past, Luxperience had taken place at large venues with hundreds of delegates, the event this year will be capped at



150 suppliers and 210 buyers.

Ormiston said applications from both exhibitors and buyers are being put through a very strict curation process to ensure an ideal fit for both parties.

For buyers to be eligible, they must have an annual turnover of \$2 million, as well as submit

references to be verified.

On the supplier side, businesses with a smaller inventory may be viewed more favourably than those capable of catering to a higher volume market, particularly if the product is new and something different.

"We're kind of niche, premium, luxury, leisure - that's all we are - so it's quite targeted in terms of audience, and we want to find

the hidden gems, not the mass market big chains - that's not what we're about," Ormiston said.

"For example, this year we've attracted one hotel in Melbourne and their concept is having everything sustainable [while being] surrounded by 3,500m² of parkland, so unique...but still luxury," Ormiston added.

One overseas supplier exhibiting for the first time is New Zealand's Flock Hill Lodge in Canterbury, a four-bedroom homestead located on a working sheep station.

Exhibitors from longer-haul markets include St Tropez Tourism, while new international hotels will include Paris' Hotel Plaza Elysees and One Aldwych, a boutique property from London.

Ormiston said exhibitors know Australians enjoy travelling in style, take longer trips and are willing to venture into room rates north of \$700 per night for a truly captivating experience.

"There's an attraction for European suppliers to come to Australia and meet these travel advisors, and they're all saying there are many bookings coming out of Australia already and they want to meet the advisors dealing with these luxury clients," Ormiston explained.

Expressions of interest to attend Luxperience in either capacity close on 09 Sep, with allocation for international buyers full and limited space left for locally-based buyers to attend. *ML*

Luxury Travel Collection steal ILTM's spotlight

MEMBER agents from Luxury Travel Collection were in their element last week at ILTM Asia Pacific in Singapore, mingling among hundreds of high-end exhibitors at the event.

The group was hosted by Alison Roberts-Brown from Tourism Garden along with Fangfang-Meloide Li-Porta and Tony Knox from Monte Carlo Societe des Bains de Mer.

Highlights of the week included a delectable lunch at Maison + Boulud, one of



Singapore's premium and most renowned restaurants.

"Another great day at the desk," quipped Home Travel Company's Robyn Sinfield, one of the founding members of LTC.

Free night in France

SCENIC has launched a new special offer for travellers with their eye on a luxury 2025 river cruise in France.

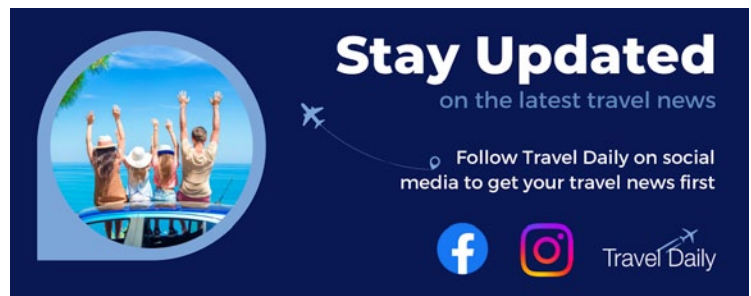
Guests can enjoy one free night accommodation before or after their cruise with new bookings of any of Scenic's 11-day itineraries which explore Lyon in the south, Normandy in the north or Bordeaux's wine regions.

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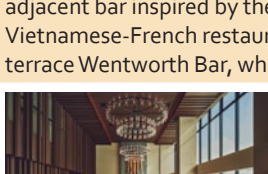


Rydges North Sydney has reopened after undergoing a complete refurbishment across all rooms, dining, conferencing and communal areas. The property, located next to the new Victoria Cross Sydney Metro Station, now boasts 168 transformed

rooms and suites featuring an abundance of natural light, as well as neutral tones, tactile fixtures and modern artwork. There are also five newly designed meeting areas with the latest audiovisual technology.



Four new House Made Hospitality restaurants and bars are set to open at **Sofitel Sydney Wentworth** in Sep, with the property unveiling a first glimpse at the new venues. The new offerings include Tilda, a ground-floor seafood restaurant, and an adjacent bar inspired by the glamour of the 1960s; Delta Rue, a Vietnamese-French restaurant on the fifth floor; and finally, the rooftop terrace Wentworth Bar, which will be able to accommodate 250 guests.



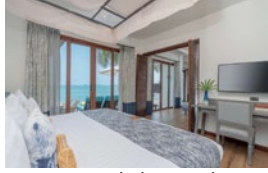
ANA InterContinental Appi Kogen Resort is one of the first five IHG Hotels & Resorts properties in Japan to be awarded with a Michelin Key, which recognises the most outstanding hotels worldwide, taking into account factors such as architecture, design, and value for price. ANA InterContinental Beppu Resort & Spa, Six Senses Kyoto, InterContinental Yokohama Pier 8, and InterContinental Osaka also received the coveted key.



Raffles has announced the opening of its second property in India, located in the country's 'Pink City'. Designed to look like a modern-day palace, the new **Raffles Jaipur** is hand-carved from pure white marble, with opulent details like golden murals and painted corniced ceilings throughout. The property features 50 rooms and suites, each with a unique layout and huge balcony.



The 354-key **Sheraton Lanzhou Anning** is now welcoming guests, marking Sheraton Hotels & Resorts' 100th property in Greater China. Situated on the banks of the Yellow River, the new hotel is conveniently located 55km from Lanzhou Zhongchuan Int'l Airport, and close to historical and cultural attractions. Guests can dine at three restaurants, a specialty cafe, and a cosy bar.



Uber slashes fares

RIDESHARE giant Uber says it plans to cut fares for its services by up to 5% from next month in an effort to secure more customers to its platform.

In an email to drivers, the company said from 07 Aug, it will change its time and distance rates to be based more on the time of the trip and the point of origin and destination.

Uber says the decision is likely to draw new customers and ultimately result in more trips for driver partners.

The move has been slammed by the Transport Workers Union though, with National Secretary, Michael Kaine stating drivers will bear the brunt in a market battered by a lack of regulation.



ITA, LH get the nod

LUFTHANSA has been given the green light from the European Commission to acquire a 41% stake in Italy's ITA Airways

The €325 million transaction, initially agreed upon last year (**TD** 26 May 2023), is expected to close in the final quarter of 2024.

Once finalised, ITA Airways will become the fifth network airline to join Lufthansa Group while also retaining its brand name.

ITA Airways Chairman, Antonino Turicchi, said the authorisation is "a virtuous example of consolidation in the airline industry and marks a crucial milestone in the development of ITA Airways".

Window Seat

THE new URBNSURF Sydney surf park almost faced its first public relations crisis yesterday, with Penrith Panthers superstar Jarome Luai having to be rescued from the water (**pictured**).

The three-time premierships winner, who admitted he is not the strongest swimmer, said his "life flashed before his eyes" as he entered the water and very quickly got himself into trouble.

Luai confessed to being slightly overambitious as lifeguards came to his rescue to drag him to safety with a flotation device.

"I just jumped the gun, [I] just wanted to attack it head-on but almost died out there... grateful to be alive," he said.

URBNSURF General Manager Shaun Hutchison said the facility's number one priority is safety - which its lifeguards expertly demonstrated.

"It was fantastic to host the NSW Origin team this morning at our new surf park and while we understand the excitement of the occasion, all guests are required to participate in the mandatory safety briefing before entering the water and get in the water at the entry points," he said.



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FROM

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Ningaloo Reef & Coral Coast

9 nights

PACKAGES INCLUDE:

10 days car hire, 1 night in Perth (Boorloo), Perth & Fremantle City Explorer, 2 nights in Geraldton (Jambinu), 1 night in Kalbarri, 2 nights in Monkey Mia, 1 night in Carnarvon, 2 nights at Ningaloo Reef (Nyinggulu) at Sal Salis Ningaloo Reef (All Inclusive), and Ningaloo Whale Shark Swim & Eco Tour.

HELIO CODE: AU46640

FROM

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Perth & Fremantle

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PACKAGES INCLUDE:

3 nights in Perth (Boorloo), Experience Rottneest Island (Wadjemup) with Bike Hire tour ex. Perth, and a one way cruise from Perth to Fremantle, finishing with 2 nights in Fremantle (Walyalup).

HELIO CODE: AU46787

FROM

\$769 pp twin share*

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