

Air credit with Swan

EXPEDITION cruise brand Swan Hellenic is offering up to \$1,250 in air credit per person on balcony cabins booked on 2025 voyages before 15 Oct.

The 'Explore Further' promo covers 2025 voyages in the Arctic, Mediterranean & South America.

More with less for FCTG

FLIGHT Centre Travel Group (FCTG) is on track to equal its best-ever Total Transaction Value (TTV) from the 2019 FY, despite having only 65% of its head count from five years ago.

In a revised profit guidance posted to the ASX earlier today (**TD** breaking news), the retail giant revealed it expects to close its books on FY2024 with TTV of \$23.7 billion, marking a \$1.7b jump on its result one year earlier.

Profit margins are on track to hit 1.4%, up 0.6% year-on-year.

The company said the result is particularly strong considering "significant airfare deflation" seen throughout the year - especially between Jan and Jun 2024.

"Average international airfares decreased by 6% globally during the H2, compared to the FY23 H2 and by almost 13% in Australia to offset the circa 10% growth we recorded in ticket volumes in Australia during the six months

to Jun 30," said FCTG Managing Director, Graham 'Skroo' Turner.

Underlying Profit Before Tax (PBT) is expected to be in the range of \$316 million and \$324 million - representing a profit downgrade from the \$340 million projected earlier this year.

The downgrade comes as FCTG opted to close its loss-making DMC Discova Central Americas, which had accrued \$4 million in trading losses, sparking a review.

The guidance was also updated to reflect one-off restructuring costs, which saw StudentUniverse repositioned within FCTG's online travel agency division, alongside Aunt Betty & BYOJet, with the former hoping to shift a \$9.5m loss to break even in '25. *ML*

Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today features seven pages of the latest travel industry news including our **Luxury** page.

Fly, stay and cruise

PONANT has launched new fly, stay and cruise packages valid on 18 Kimberley departures from May to Sep 2025.

Packages include return flights from major Australian and NZ cities, transfers, one night pre-cruise and a 10-night voyage.

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VIEW DEAL

Qantas joins SAF alliance

QANTAS has joined an alliance of airlines, an aircraft manufacturer, and energy and financing companies to accelerate the global production of sustainable aviation fuel (SAF).

The Sustainable Aviation Fuel Financing Alliance (SAFFA) consists of Airbus as the anchor investor, plus Air France-KLM, Mitsubishi HC Capital Inc, BNP Paribas, Associated Energy Group, and Burnham Sterling Asset

Management (as fund manager).

The partners have committed around US\$200 million, including US\$50 million from Qantas, to fund SAF technology development and production projects, with an initial focus on opportunities in the US that repurpose existing infrastructure.

Qantas and the SAFFA partners will also be able to enter into priority offtake contracts for the supply of SAF produced through the supported projects.

“Aviation is one of the hardest sectors to decarbonise and it’s going to take partnerships across industries like this to help close the gap between supply and demand,” Qantas Group CEO, Vanessa Hudson, said.

“The SAFFA fund will enable us to get priority access to SAF sooner in key overseas markets while helping drive the development of the overall industry,” she added.

MEANWHILE, Qantas is looking at more domestic opportunities for investment from its Climate Fund, which it expects to finalise in the coming months. *JM*

Celestyal’s podium

CRUISE passengers can race into Olympic history with Celestyal Cruises on a National Geographic Day Tour in Athens.

The history of the Olympic Games tour will see travellers step into the birthplace of the event, visiting sites including the Panathenaic Stadium, and the Athens Olympic Museum.

Cruisers will also visit the Athens Olympic Sports Complex, where a former Olympic athlete will offer a personalised tour.

The tour is part of a series of seven National Geographic Day Tours which Celestyal offers across Greece and Croatia.



SYD has more gusto

GUSTO Pasta Bar and Lumos Bakery have touched down in Terminal 1 at Sydney International Airport.

The new dining venues are set to offer handmade pasta, paninis, pizza, and pastries.

“These new offerings will deliver fresh and delicious cafe fare and reflect our commitment to providing the very best in contemporary food,” SYD Exec GM Commercial Mark Zaouk said.

Japan still key: TTNQ

EXCLUSIVE

JAPAN remains a key market for Tropical North Queensland despite Virgin Australia recently making the call to scrap services between Cairns and Tokyo from 24 Feb 2025 (**TD** 22 Jul).

Speaking with **TD** after the shock news this week, Tourism Tropical North Queensland (TTNQ) CEO, Mark Olsen, said he was disappointed by market conditions in Japan hampering air connectivity to Queensland - especially after the tourism body had invested significant resources in recent months.

“In addition to working with travel agency partners, we have hosted media and trade famils, completed in-market training and targeted consumers directly through social media and attendance at the Marine Diving Fair,” Olsen (**pictured**) said.

“Through the International Tourism Recovery Program funding from the Federal Government, TTNQ has also rolled out numerous industry campaigns to drive demand on the Haneda service to Cairns.

“These delivered more than \$5.6 million in direct sales, bringing over 10,600 passengers since the service began last year.”

Olsen added that TTNQ would continue to work closely with its partners to support inbound travel from Tokyo and Osaka.

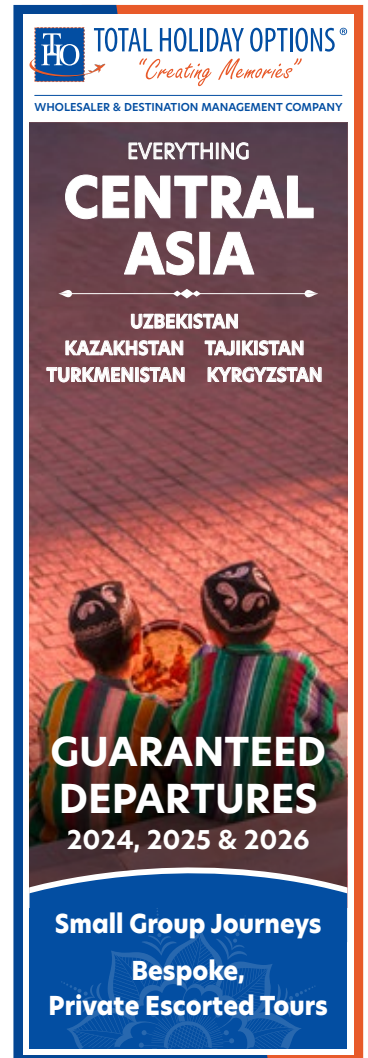


Biggest book ever

ANZCRO Australia has announced the release of its latest Australia Book 2024-2025.

The new publication is the company’s biggest edition to date to celebrate 30 years of operation, and contains more product inclusions for regional Tasmania, the Top End, Norfolk Island and the South Pacific.

More accommodation and sightseeing suggestions are also included - **CLICK HERE** to access.



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Cruise360 reveals full speaker line-up for next month



FIVE headline cruise industry leaders from around the world will take to the stage at the sold-out Cruise360 next month.

The speakers, revealed in **Cruise Weekly** exclusively this morning, will include Port of Seattle Tourism Development Manager Chantelle Lusebrink, Tauck Vice President Global Sales Steve Spivak, and Aurora Expeditions Global Head of Sales David Tanguay (pictured).

Lusebrink, who will join a panel discussion on how to harness the potential of immersive pre-and post-cruise experiences, possesses varied experience across the tourism industry, and is passionate about building community coalitions to advance economic vitality.

Spivak, who has a background in hotels and resorts, will discuss how to unlock the luxury market, including strategies for

maximising opportunities.

Tanguay will join a panel discussion on emerging cruise trends, and how embracing these changes can open up new growth.

Also joining Cruise360 will be Silversea Senior Vice President Expeditions, Destination & Itinerary Management Conrad Combrinck, while Celestyal Cruises Chief Commercial Officer Lee Haslett will return after his appearance last year. *MS*

Explore urges industry to evolve

AS COP29 approaches, global tour operator Explore Worldwide is urging the global travel industry to prioritise reducing emissions.

The UK-based brand, which now has an office in Australia, has become one of the first adventure operators to offer customers the option to purchase Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF) alongside their holiday bookings.

Despite low public awareness of SAF, demand for sustainable travel is high, Explore said.

A survey by the company revealed that 50% of travellers want to reduce their environmental impact; 51% believe the industry and consumers should share this financial responsibility; and 45% think the sector needs to develop low-emission aviation fuels.

Explore is calling for travel brands to make climate change solutions more accessible.



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Four Seasons Hotel Hangzhou wants you

FOUR Seasons Hotel Hangzhou at Hangzhou Centre, the brand's second hotel in the city, is set to open later this year.

The property, which will complement the Four Seasons Hotel Hangzhou At West Lake, is now accepting reservations for arrivals beginning in Oct.

The new Four Seasons is located on the edge of Wulin Square, and housed within the new Hangzhou Centre, a mixed-used development which includes residences, offices, shopping, and dining in two towers.

It is just a short walk from additional shopping centres, the Wulin Night Market, and myriad restaurants and bars.

A hand for Edenhope

VISITORS to Edenhope now have more accommodation and reasons to stay in the town, with the extension of one of the destination's caravan parks on the foreshore of Lake Wallace.

Victoria's Minister for Tourism, Steve Dimopoulos, congratulated the Edenhope Lakeside Tourist Park on the completion of the much-needed upgrades that will entice visitors to stay longer.

The project expanded the park to include 10 additional fully-serviced powered sites to accommodate an extra 40 vacationers per night.

Upgrades at the Victorian site will also see a new camp kitchen and recreation room created.

Travel24 program is out

THE full program for the upcoming Travel24 conference has been unveiled, featuring insightful discussions and keynote presentations from respected thought leaders.

Hosted by **Travel Daily** and taking place on 08 August at the Sofitel Sydney Darling Harbour, the one-day event will unpack what's in store in travel over the next 24 months.

Lori Modde, Chair of NSW Tourism Association, is the latest speaker to join Travel24, where she will share her thoughts on the next big things in travel.

Modde (pictured) has held prominent roles over the span of her impressive three-decade-long career, including Regional Marketing Manager at Tourism NSW and Senior Manager of Place Activation at Sydney Olympic Park Authority.

Rounding out the Travel24 speaker line-up is Minister for Trade and Tourism Don Farrell; TedX speaker and diversity



activist Azure Antoinette; Dean Long, CEO at Australian Tourism Industry Association; Lisa Teiotu, Managing Director at MSC Cruises; Ben Hall, CEO at AAT Kings Group; and many more. View the program [HERE](#).

Bali tax facing axe?

AUSSIES visiting Bali may no longer need to pay the \$50 entry fee, with the Indonesian Government indicating it is likely to scrap the impost in order to boost the country's tourism.

Minister for Tourism and Creative Economies, Sandiaga Uno, recently revealed that President Joko Widodo had instructed the government to consider the visa waiver for as many as 20 countries that provide large volumes of tourists, including Australia.

The final list will be presented to the president over the next month, with any possible change expected early next year.

Bali's visa-on-arrival fee was previously abolished in 2016 and reintroduced following the COVID-19 pandemic.

Taiwan resort boost

CAPELLA'S first resort and second property in Taiwan is set to open to guests in 2028, and is billed as the first "world-class" opening in southern Taiwan.

The arrival of Capella Hotels & Resorts' Capella Kenting will feature oceanfront vistas and personal hot springs in every villa.

The property is located on a sprawling 99,000m² of the Hengchun Peninsula, and is designed by Italian architects Antonio Citterio and Patricia Viel.

Capella Kenting will have the largest hotel rooms in the growing Asian tourist hub, with spacious accommodations starting at 197m².

Each villa will also be equipped with a private swimming pool, hot spring facilities, and a 180° sea view, allowing guests to soak in the serene beauty of the country's coastline.

Empowering women

WORLD Expeditions has committed to empowering marginalised women and their children in Ethiopia through its new Regenerative Travel Project.

The initiative aims to provide crucial support and sustainable solutions for vulnerable single mothers, with just \$400 empowering one woman to build a future for herself and her child.

World Expeditions aims to raise \$4,000 towards this initiative, which will be implemented in collaboration with local non-profit organisation Ilanga.



Join us for a Priscilla-inspired journey through the Territory!

This evening event is an opportunity to learn about the Northern Territory, meet over 30 NT operators, enjoy NT inspired food, and experience Territory culture with a chance to win fantastic prizes!

Melbourne 10 September, Aerial, South Wharf

Brisbane 11 September, The Warehouse, Fortitude Valley

Sydney 12 September, Dockside Cockle Bay Room, Cockle Bay Wharf

Register now



Typhoon hits Taiwan

DFAT is advising Aussies who are travelling in Taiwan to contact their local tour provider or airline for the latest information regarding Typhoon Gaemi, which is likely to impact the destination from 23-25 Jul.

The severe weather event is expected to bring high winds, heavy rain, and storm surges, potentially causing disruptions to the east Asian country's air services and transport.

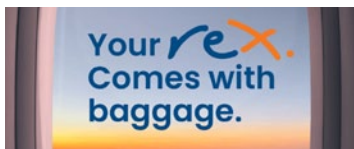
Rex the scrapper

REX Airlines has deployed the use of humour and double-entendres in its latest campaign, 'An Airfare to Remember', which will run for over a month.

Developed by full-service agency T&Pm, the digital marketing push aims to build brand awareness of Rex and its growing domestic network to major cities, which now includes flights to Perth (TD 28 May).

"Rex is a brand perfectly suited to wit and satire because it is the quintessential underdog - a scrapper from the bush who moved into big jets and brought competition," T&Pm Australia's GM Britt Lippett said.

Lippett believes the low-key and cheeky Rex campaign stands out from the cinematic-style, emotive efforts of its rivals.



Air taxis in time for Brissy?



BRISBANE may have self-flying taxis in time for the 2032 Olympics, thanks to a new partnership between Boeing subsidiary Wisk and Australian company Skyports.

The two will work together to build a network of 'vertiports' or landing pads atop buildings for autonomous air taxi services using electric vertical takeoff and landing (eVTOL) aircraft.

Once the infrastructure is ready, the plan is for Wisk aircraft to operate from Brisbane Airport to locations in the CBD, Gold Coast and other regions.

"Transport is always a challenge in big cities so the idea that you can have a trip from the airport to the city in 15 minutes in an eVTOL aircraft will deliver not only time savings but greater predictability," said Wisk Vice President of Operations and the Asia Pacific, Catherine MacGowan.

"You know that trip won't be affected by congestion and can be used as part of a day's travel around the region."

The Boeing subsidiary is currently working on its four-person-capacity generation six aircraft, which is expected to be in market by 2030, first in the US, and then in Australia.

"It's exciting to be working in Australia where we've got a combination of a forward-looking regulator looking at how to introduce innovation, the appropriate market and strong interest in this industry," MacGowan said.

"Wisk backed by Boeing has made the choice to go straight to autonomy, so we'll introduce our aircraft towards the end of this decade supervised by a multi-vehicle supervisor on the ground - but the aircraft itself will be self-flying," she explained. JM



Window Seat

IT'S PRETTY exciting when you spot a celebrity on holiday, but what about an infamous alleged criminal?

According to a report published in *New Idea*, missing Australian conwoman Melissa Caddick could be hiding in plain sight as a tourist in Bali.

The fraudster, who disappeared from Sydney nearly four years ago after her \$23 million Ponzi scheme was uncovered, has apparently been seen "limping" around the tourist hotspot - despite being declared dead in 2023.

Caddick was supposedly spotted alive and well, chatting to patrons at a well-known beach bar in Seminyak.

"She met a lady at Potato Head Beach Club that was a spitting image of her, but she was wearing a long sarong and had a limp," a post on the 'Melissa Caddick Discussion Group Alive and in Hiding' Facebook page stated.

"Bali would be one of the easiest places to get access to, she could get there by boat", one post claimed.

The limp would be consistent with wild theories suggesting Caddick removed part of her foot to evade detection from police and start a new life under a new identity.

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High Tea on QE2

CONNOISSEURS of the golden era of cruising can now indulge in classic dining on board Cunard's former flagship, the QE2.

The former ocean liner is now permanently moored in Dubai and exists as a floating hotel, managed by Accor.

Aside from breakfast, lunch and dinner seatings in the Lido Restaurant, QE2 now offers afternoon tea service on Fri and Sat from 3pm to 5pm, starting from \$72pp.

Guests can indulge in an assortment of freshly baked sweet and savoury bites including scones, hot and cold canapes, and pastries.

Alternatively, a weekend dinner buffet featuring int'l dishes, salads and desserts is also available from \$63pp.

QE2 also provides Dubai's oldest pub in the form of the Golden Lion, with bookings required for all services.

Raes chinks up 30 years

A STAPLE of Byron Bay's boutique hotel scene - Raes on Wategos - is this month marking its 30th birthday milestone with a range of special guest experiences to celebrate.

The Raes Indulgent Escape is priced from \$780 per night with a two-night minimum and includes breakfast, a series of spa treatments and a bottle of Perrier Jouët Champagne.

MANDARIN ORIENTAL IS BALI BOUND

MANDARIN Oriental will expand its network to Bali, taking charge of an expansive new cliffside resort and private residences, opening in 2027.

The hotel will be positioned on a plateau of elevated terraces on Bali's southern Bukit peninsula and will feature 110 suites and villas, each with either a private plunge pool or a lush garden.

Guests will also have access to a private and protected white sand beach along with a range of wellness experiences.

The resort has been sculpted by Design Lab architects with landscaping and interiors by iconic designers, Bill Bensley and Jeffrey Wilkes.

"We are delighted to extend Mandarin Oriental's renowned levels of hospitality and exceptional experiences to the



beautiful island of Bali," said Mandarin Oriental Hotel Group CEO, Laurent Kleitman.

"With its stunning cliff-top location and thoughtful design, underpinned by our award-winning service, this resort and branded residences will offer guests and home owners an unparalleled blend of tranquillity and elegance."

The property will feature a

cliff-edge restaurant and bar, a Chinese restaurant and a beach club, along with an expansive lawn for weddings and events.

Golfers will be spoiled for choice with the Bukit Pandawa golf course next door and Bali National a short drive away.

Mandarin Oriental Bali will be the hotel group's second offering in Indonesia, alongside Mandarin Oriental Jakarta. *ML*

An act of treason

INTERCONTINENTAL

Hayman Island will celebrate National Agave Day by introducing the 'All Australian Margarita' via a beachside bar and in-house tastings.

Known as 'Act of Treason', the beverage has been crafted using agave locally distilled in the Whitsundays, as 100 agave plants continue to mature on the island itself.

Guests can sample the beverage across the resort until the end of this week.

Abercrombie & Kent launch brand-new safaris

FOUR new 'Tailor-Made Journeys' in Southern and East Africa have been launched by Abercrombie & Kent, some of which take travellers deep into Cape Town and Victoria Falls.

Leading the four new tours is the 10-day 'Cape, Kruger and Victoria Falls Explorer', which connects the two highlights of Africa with direct internal flights and time on safari at a reserve near Kruger National Park.

Travellers can also explore Botswana's exciting Okavango

Delta and Chobe National Park, where lions, leopards and elephants roam.

A more intimate adventure in Botswana is available via the 11-day 'Botswana Explorer', which includes a visit to the Makgadikgadi Pans National Park, with game viewing options by 4WD, boat and on foot.

The final new offering is the 10-day 'East Africa Explorer' which takes guests into Kenya and Tanzania with stays in spacious camps and lodges.

AUSTRALIA'S
KIMBERLEY

THE PONANT WAY

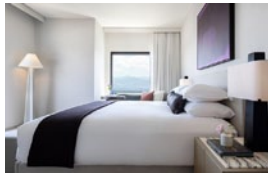
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IHG Hotels & Resorts has announced the opening of **Kimpton Claret Hotel** in South Denver's burgeoning Belleview Station neighborhood. The first lifestyle boutique hotel in the area, Kimpton Claret features 190 guest rooms in calming tones of grey, beige and cream, featuring striking modern artwork and large picture windows looking out onto the mountain landscape. Guests can dine at Saverina, the hotel's Italian-inspired restaurant, or the Halo Rooftop Bar.



Grand Mirage Dhanbad has opened in the Indian city of Dhanbad, surrounded by parks, historic sites, and natural wonders like Bhatinda Falls and Parasnath Hill. Part of the Radisson Individuals brand, the property's elegant and modern rooms feature free wi-fi, flat-screen TVs, and in-room safes. Guests will have access to the onsite 24-hour fitness centre and a diverse range of dining options, including Vista, which offers buffets for lunch and dinner.



Boasting sweeping ocean views, MGM Hospitality has introduced a new hotel to China's seaside city of Shenzhen. Situated on Xiaomeisha Beach, **MGM Shenzhen** offers 321 stylish rooms, with 15 unique room types available including a luxurious 390m² Presidential Suite. The property also features a chic Lobby Lounge, rooftop star-gazing bar, Leo Kids Club, Grand Ballroom, and versatile venues like Baikal Lake and Poseidon.



Hilton has celebrated its 20th hotel in Rio de Janeiro, and the first in the country for its Tapestry brand. Located in the trendy Botafogo neighbourhood, **Yoo2 Rio de Janeiro, Tapestry Collection by Hilton** offers stunning views of Sugar Loaf Mountain and Christ the Redeemer. The 135-key hotel is adorned with colourful murals, palm-print ceilings, and furniture inspired by street art.



After undergoing a huge renovation project, the five-star **Mediterranean Palace Hotel** is now ready to welcome guests once again in Tenerife's Mare Nostrum Resort overlooking the Atlantic Ocean. The property's 450 rooms and suites have been updated and modernised, while gastronomic options have been expanded to cover different themes, cuisines, and styles.

There's snow place like Sapporo



THE 321-room Courtyard Sapporo has debuted in one of Japan's most popular winter holiday destinations.

The hotel is set to welcome business and leisure travellers to Hokkaido, which is famous for its skiing, snow festival, and the Sapporo Beer Museum.

This is the accommodation brand's eighth property in Japan and the first Courtyard by Marriott hotel in Hokkaido.

Rooms are equipped with Serta beds and free wi-fi, while guests can also dine at two venues, The Lounge and Substance.

The hotel also offers a fully-equipped 24-hour fitness centre with the latest Technogym machines, and the exclusive Japanese Spa, which features a modern Japanese-style bath.

"We are full of positive anticipation as we embark on this exciting journey with the opening of Courtyard by Marriott Sapporo, the eighth Courtyard hotel in Japan and the first to debut in beautiful Hokkaido," Marriott International Area Vice President Japan & Guam Karl Hudson said.

"Courtyard by Marriott hotels combine innovative technology with style and comfort, with open and inviting public spaces and we are looking forward to welcoming next-generation guests at Courtyard by Marriott Sapporo, whether they are travelling on business, leisure, or both." MS

Pictured: A preview of the Superior King room.

Hawai'i slightly down

HAWAIIAN hotels have reported a moderate decline in occupancy, average daily rate, and revenue per available room for the last month compared to the prior corresponding period.

Statewide ADR and RevPAR were higher last month compared to the pre-pandemic Jun 2019, however occupancy was lower.

Statewide RevPAR last month was US\$281 (-5.1%), with ADR at US\$373 (-3.7%), and occupancy of 75.5% (-1.2 percentage points) compared to Jun 2023.

Compared with Jun 2019, RevPAR was 19.5% higher, driven by higher ADR (+32.8%).