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Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today features eight pages of the latest travel news, including our **Corporate Update**, plus a cover wrap from **Journey Beyond**.

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SYD chaos ahead

TRAVELLERS using Sydney Airport next Wed 31 Jul are being warned of flight cancellations and delays as refuellers state their intention to go on strike after a breakdown in wage and job disputes with Ampol. The planned six-hour walk off is expected to impact 16 domestic and international airlines, including Qantas, Virgin, Jetstar, Air NZ, DL and British Airways.

New NSW tourism body

THOUSANDS of NSW tourism businesses now have a new advocate, after the official launch last night of the newly minted NSW Tourism Association.

It's the first time in many years that a dedicated organisation is representing the state's sector, after the former NSW Tourism Industry Council was absorbed into Business NSW some time ago.

The reformation has been coordinated under the leadership of Lori Modde, coordinating a high-profile group of founding members, as well as recruiting the highly respected Natalie Godward as founding CEO.

Modde told attendees at the launch last night that the new organisation is "committed to spearheading initiatives that will not only fill the existing gaps within the industry, but also propel it towards new heights of success and celebration".

The new association is also the

licensee of the Quality Tourism Framework in NSW, giving the state's tourism businesses the opportunity to showcase their quality and excellence in a nationally benchmarked scheme. Modde said the NSW Tourism Association will steadfastly work to advocate for policy change by working closely with government, industry stakeholders and other tourism industry councils across the country.

"It is also committed to building industry capacity by offering resources, training and support to tourism operators to enhance service quality and operational efficiency," she said. *BP*

More from the event on **page 5**.

Oceania agent tool

OCEANIA Cruises has introduced a free tool for travel advisors that it pledges will help boost client engagement.

Oceania Insider Connect is powered by Approach Guides technology, and offers two marketing solutions; the ability to create co-brandable marketing pages, as well as the option for a co-branded website with real-time pricing and availability.

The new tool also leverages artificial intelligence to make suggestions to sellers around engaging social posts and client emails, as well as create dynamic QR codes that can be linked back to an advisor's own website.

Agents can access the new Insider Connect tool **HERE**.

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Travel budgets rise by 35%

AUSTRALIANS are having to save 35% more in their travel budgets to cater for rising inflation and cost of living.

The finding was contained in a new report from Insure&Go's parent Europ Assistance, which found the travel budget increase of roughly a third had occurred over the last 12 months.

More than 1,000 Australians took part in the study of 21 countries, with the report suggesting the average Aussie travel budget had grown to \$6,145 from \$4,548 in 2023.

Australian travellers were also found to be forking out 55% more than their European counterparts, and 15% more than the budgets of North Americans.

While the figures are an encouraging sign that Aussies are prepared to keep spending a healthy portion of the household budget on travel, the report was not as optimistic for

accommodation providers.

Close to 60% of Aussies indicated they will seek out cheaper accommodation to make their budgets stretch further, while just over half also suggested they would cut down on food and activity spend.

Further budget concessions were confirmed for transport, with 55% of Australians stating they will take cheaper options where available.

Four in 10 Aussies also revealed they will select a destination closer to home to ease the travel budget, and a similar percentage will reduce their trip duration to make ends meet.

While budgets are the biggest indicator of destination choice, other factors filtering into the decision-making process include leisure or cultural activities (51%), the weather (37%), and the quality of onsite tourist infrastructure (34%). *AB*

Goulter steps down

AIR New Zealand Director Paul Goulter will retire from the board on 26 Sep, citing an increasing workload in his role as CEO of the NZ Nurses Organisation.

The carrier's Chair, Therese Walsh, confirmed Goulter had served for nearly three years and will not seek re-election at this year's ASM next month.

Walsh also noted the significant contributions he made during his tenure, especially in the area of industrial relations.

Rex chief assurance

FOLLOWING a potential coup on the board of Rex Airlines (*TD* 12 Jul), parent company Regional Express Holdings has moved to put protections in place for current CEO Neville Howell.

Howell's employment agreement has been amended to include a bonus paid to the chief if there is a change of control involving the composition of the majority of the board or shareholding in the business.

Regional Express also stated that in the event of a significant change to Howell's duties, or a change that substantially reduces his status at the company without his consent, he will be terminated immediately and receive payment in lieu of 12 months' notice.

Howell will now be afforded a 12-month termination notice period and a three-month resignation notice timeline.

The changes follow a push by former Exec Chair Lim Kim Hai to overthrow the board.

Travel24 reminder

THERE are less than two weeks to go before *Travel Daily's* Travel24 event, and the full program is now available to browse on the website.

There are more than 180 registered guests, with that number climbing every day.

Tickets are still available but be quick and lock in your attendance now - [CLICK HERE](#) for full details.

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EOIs are now open

REGIONAL tourism businesses in NSW will have the opportunity to showcase their experiences at the Asia Pacific Incentives and Meetings Event (AIME) from 10-12 Feb 2025.

Expressions are now open to co-exhibit with Destination NSW's regional conferencing program, Business Events NSW.

The marquee business events gathering will take place in Melbourne and is predicted to attract over 3,500 attendees.

Seniors help tourism

AUSTRALIA'S tourism workforce is experiencing a boost in manpower, as more seniors are taking on roles within the industry following the introduction of the Work Bonus increase in 2022.

According to new data from Austrade, 11% more pensioners were working in the visitor economy at the end of 2022-2023, compared to the previous financial year.

In 2022, older Aussies were invited to earn money in tourism while also receiving the pension.

Tourism careers on show

OPPORTUNITIES to build a dynamic and rewarding career in Western Australia's tourism and hospitality sector are now on show at the 2024 Perth SkillsWest Careers and Employment Expo.

The two-day showcase is the state's largest careers expo, with Tourism WA on hand to promote employment opportunities to job seekers and school-leavers.

A variety of businesses across the WA tourism spectrum will be on hand thanks to a \$5 million funding boost from the WA State Government to continue the Tourism Workforce Development Program for two more years.

Since the program's launch in 2022, it has hosted nearly 140 tourism job-ready workshops to 1,430 participants across the state and by extension, more than 15,500 school students through in-school career pathways.

The Workforce Development Program has also provided hospitality training for over 500 international students through a partnership with StudyPerth.

Western Australia Tourism Minister, Rita Saffioti, said a

highly skilled and robust tourism and hospitality workforce is critical to driving a high-performing tourism industry.

"The next two years of the Tourism Workforce Development Program will continue to provide job-ready training to fill immediate vacancies and upskilling to retain essential workers in the industry, while also building a pipeline of future talent," Minister Saffioti said.

"Our Government's commitment to supporting the industry will also have a flow-on benefit to visitors, ensuring that Western Australia continues to deliver world-class and unforgettable experiences for out-of-state visitors." *ML*

Dollars for digitising

SMALL and medium sized tourism businesses in Queensland can access a \$2,500 rebate for boosting their digital capabilities.

The 'Tourism Business Digital Adoption Program' is sponsored by the Queensland Tourism Industry Council (QTIC) and is open to more than 1,600 enterprises across the state.

Businesses are encouraged to develop online booking platforms, create new digital products such as webinars and generally improve the online customer experience "to match the high-quality of your real-world tourism product", QTIC said.

JQ dumps DRW-CNS

JETSTAR will cease flying between Cairns and Darwin from 29 Oct, with Qantas to go daily on the route instead.

The Flying Kangaroo currently operates the route at a frequency of three times a week.

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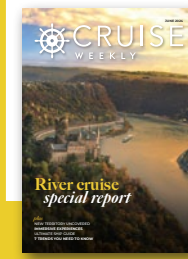
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We must protect pax

CRUISE Lines International Association (CLIA) Europe has suggested cruise lines may have to take drastic action to ensure the safety of guests in the face of rising environmental protests across the continent.

Director General of CLIA Europe, Marie-Caroline Laurent, told *Reuters* this week there is likely to be consideration by cruise lines to adapt itineraries in Europe as they feel their passengers are not being well treated.

The comments follow a spate of incidents in Europe which has seen cruise tourists picketed at major tourist sites in countries such as Spain and Portugal.

Laurent added that the cruise industry had ordered 57 more cruise ships in addition to around 300 in operation, to meet the projected demand for cruising.

QR big on Boeing

QATAR Airways has announced an order for 20 more Boeing 777-9 passenger jets, which takes the airline's 777X-model aircraft order book to nearly 100 planes.

The commissioning is part of a growth plan for Qatar which includes Boeing 787 Dreamliners and 737 MAX models.

"Qatar Airways is proud to announce an expansion to the existing Boeing 777X aircraft order with an additional 20, totalling 94 Boeing 777X aircraft," Group Chief Executive Officer, Badr Mohammed Al-Meer said.

QR currently operates one of the industry's youngest fleets.

A new Link joining the chain



LINK Travel Group has announced its newest staff member, Emmalita Malmberg, who has been appointed as National Business Manager.

Malmberg will work with the invite-only luxury and corporate travel advisor network to help its members unlock the vast array of benefits available in the group's ecosystem, including maximising revenue and margin.

"We are all incredibly excited to have someone with Emmalita's experience, astute acumen and solid reputation join Link and we are excited for the future," the group said in a LinkedIn post.

The appointment was celebrated yesterday morning at an exclusive Link breakfast at The Langham, Sydney.

The event saw senior staff from some of Langham's properties

around Asia-Pacific in attendance, where they met with Link members to discuss how to increase sales.

"On behalf of Link, I just want to thank you very much Langham, you guys have looked after us, it's a very special partnership and it's a partnership we encourage to be at a granular level," the network's General Manager Scott Darlow told attendees.

Darlow is **pictured** at the event second from the right with Jeffrey Van Vosselen, Langham Hospitality Group; Amanda Frack, Langham Hospitality Group; Danielle Galloway, Link Travel Group; Shane Jolly, The Langham Sydney; Penny Spencer, Link Travel Group; Lawrence Ng, Langham Hospitality Group; and Edward Hobson, Langham Hospitality Group. *MS*



Window Seat

TRAVELLERS to the United States beware, Southwest Airlines is dealing with exploding soda cans on flights in some American cities.

The low-cost carrier is seeing the issue "pop up" in Las Vegas, Phoenix, and other hot climates, according to *The Washington Post*.

At least 20 flight attendants have been injured this summer after soda cans burst and exploded when opened.

Southwest thinks the cause of the problem is that the cans became too hot before they were loaded onto their flight.

WN is vulnerable to this problem because the airline doesn't serve perishable foods, and stores its soda at airports rather than refrigerated trucks.

Airports where the Texas-based airline has a large presence, such as Las Vegas and Phoenix, continue to receive record temperatures this summer.

"We're aware of the issue and have been taking steps to keep onboard beverages cooler, especially in our airports experiencing extreme temperatures," Southwest said in a statement.

"It's a cross-functional effort between our airport teams and those in the air."

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AA failed direct ploy costly

AMERICAN Airlines has conceded its previous distribution strategy which cut travel agents out of the sales chain cost the carrier any chance of hitting profit expectations for the Q2 of the financial year.

Speaking at a financial update delivered overnight, AA CEO Robert Isom said despite a growing fleet and network, the airline did not meet preliminary forecasts for the quarter.

"We are taking the challenge [of changing the distribution

strategy] head-on, with clear and decisive actions to deliver on a strategy that maximises our revenue and profitability, and importantly, one that makes it easy for customers to do business with American," Isom said.

"I'll just be frank, we over-indexed on directs and we've got to find a way to play in the richer pool of indirect revenue and that starts with having content, having positive relationships with travel management companies and agencies," he added.

Profits dropped by 46% for the quarter to US\$717 million.

The carrier backed away from its aggressive approach targeting direct bookings in May (**TD** 31 May), notably by removing its cheapest fares from GDS platforms and scrapping loyalty mileage accrual on tickets booked through travel agencies. **AB**

Vietjet spreads wings

ONE of the largest deals to get the sign off at the Farnborough International Airshow 2024 was Vietjet and Airbus' new contract.

Vietjet will purchase 20 new-generation wide-body A330neo aircraft, a sale worth US\$7.4 billion (A\$11.3 billion).

The newly ordered aircraft will be deployed for Vietjet's growing long-haul services, as well as on routes with high demand in the geographic region.

New aircraft are slated to replace Vietjet's current fleet of A330-300 planes and will support the airline's strategic plan to expand its intercontinental flight network.

The contract signing ceremony was witnessed by Vietjet Chairwoman Nguyen Thi Phuong Thao, and Airbus CEO of the Commercial Aircraft Business Christian Scherer.

Preferred adds 30

IN THE largest addition of new members since 2018, Preferred Hotels & Resorts has added 30 properties to its global portfolio between 01 Apr and 30 Jun.

Ranging from an adults-only all-inclusive resorts to preserved historic villas, each of the properties added to the network aim to provide personalised luxury guest experiences across its range of global destinations.

These include South Africa, Portugal, Saudi Arabia, and the Dominican Republic.

FORMER NSW Tourism Minister, Stuart Ayres, last night urged businesses to "bring your passion" to policy discussions with governments, saying the formation of the NSW Tourism Association (see **p1**) brings a new era for the sector's representation in the state.

Ayres is a staunch ambassador for the new body, and noted the presence at the launch of attendees from the offices of Federal Tourism Minister Don Farrell, his NSW counterpart John Graham as well as NSW Shadow Tourism Minister, Gurmesh Singh.

Ayres said the new organisation was definitely non-partisan, "but I can tell you it's going to be fiercely political, engaged in government, talking to politicians, MPs and public servants - a really strong voice for tourism".

"As someone who has been in the role of tourism minister, I can tell you it's really needed.

"The advocacy body for tourism is not Destination NSW - they're a part of government, doing a great job...but your job is to back up [NSW Tourism Association CEO] Natalie Godward and [Chair] Lori Modde and be a super strong voice so governments at a national level and state level

understand how important your businesses are to the economy - the jobs you create, the value that you add in communities, the way you change the lifestyle for individuals.

"You're the front door, the welcoming voice to our state and our country," Ayres enthused.

He said NSW tourism businesses need to "bring your voice to the conversation, because that's the only way government will listen".

"It hasn't existed for a long time in NSW, it's been too fragmented for too long, and tonight that changes," he added.

Founding CEO Godward said she was ready for the challenge of the wide-ranging role, which as well as shaping policies that benefit the tourism sector also involves overseeing the Quality Tourism accreditation program in the state, fostering strategic partnerships, addressing industry gaps and promoting collaboration across the sector.

Ayres is **pictured** above with, from left: Domino Houlbrook-Cove, NSW Tourism Association Admin Support; CEO Natalie Godward; Chair Lori Modde; Stuart Ayres; and Erin McLeod, Australian Tourism Industry Council CEO.

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Aboriginal tourism success demonstrated

THE NT Government's Aboriginal Tourism Accelerator Showcase has been declared a success, following the completion of the six-month program.

Eight entrepreneurs in the NT showcased their ideas to create and grow sustainable tourism businesses this week, after completing the program, which was delivered by IBA in partnership with the government.

"This transformative journey has been nothing short of remarkable," said Southern Arrernte leader Stella de Cos, IBA Director Community & Customer Experience.

"The program has empowered our Aboriginal entrepreneurs and allowed them to develop their business ideas and skills.

"We're immensely proud of our participants, and the great strides they've made."

NT Minister for Tourism Joel Bowden added: "we're pleased to have partnered with Indigenous Business Australia who have an excellent track record in delivering successful accelerator programs, and promoting genuine Aboriginal cultural experiences in tourism; we look forward to seeing new and innovative business ideas for the Territory come from the program."

The program was open to Aboriginal Territorians and NT-based Aboriginal businesses and organisations which were greater than 50% Aboriginal owned.

Intrepid's Phnom-enal famil



INTREPID Travel recently hosted Australians in Cambodia on a seven-day media famil, its first-ever in the country.

The trip, which took place last month, consisted of five days in Siem Reap and an overnight stay in Battambang, Cambodia's third-largest city.

Highlights included a sunrise visit to Angkor Wat, a local boat tour discovering the floating villages of Tonle Sap, a cycling tour through Battambang's countryside, and various Cambodian food experiences.

The group also visited the Intrepid Foundation's partner, Cambodia Rural Student Trust, for a first-hand look at its work in breaking the poverty cycle through educating and empowering the country's youth.

"We were thrilled to host our

very first media trip in Cambodia and showcase our country's rich culture and unique experiences," Intrepid's local General Manager Aye Mya Mya Soe told *The Phnom Penh Post*.

"Intrepid has an ambitious goal to double the number of travellers visiting Cambodia and we hope the stories generated from this tour will inspire readers to visit our beautiful country."

The company currently employs 20 staff and 30 local tour leaders in Cambodia, according to *The Post*, and anticipates it will operate 700 group trips this year, bringing nearly 10,000 travellers to explore the country.

Intrepid last week also announced the release of a guidebook designed to help agents better sell sustainable travel (**TD** 19 Jul). *MS*

Jasper is burning

AN ONGOING wildfire in Jasper is devastating the tourism town in the Canadian Rockies.

The wildfire has spread to the surrounding Jasper National Park, with an official from the Alberta province saying the blaze is still out of control.

Roughly 25,000 people have been evacuated from the National Park, the *BBC* reports.

The scale of the damage is still unclear, but an official says 30-50% of buildings in Jasper may have been destroyed.

The fire is believed to have started during a lightning storm.



Bigger is better?

THE average aircraft size flown in key world regions is increasing, according to Brazilian aircraft manufacturer Embraer.

This is reflected in the strong order backlog for new large narrowbodies, however, larger aircraft are not always economically or operationally optimal for medium- and lower-density markets, Embraer added.

This is particularly the case when multiple daily frequencies are essential for those cities to stay well-connected, Embraer said in its *Market Outlook 2024*.

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CORPORATE UPDATE

Rologas takes charge at FCM

FLIGHT Centre Travel Group's (CTG) corporate travel division FCM has formally welcomed long-time FCM executive Renos Rologas to role General Manager for the ANZ market.

The news follows the departure of General Manager ANZ, Melissa Elf last month, who handed the baton on to focus on the brand's global business in the role of FCTG Corporate Global COO.

Rologas steps into the position after spending close to 20 years with the business, where he has looked after various account management roles.

Reflecting on his promotion,



Rologas said he will be working on continuing a customer-centric mantra at FCM.

"We are heavily focused on engaging and speaking to our customers, to understand what their challenges are, and how we can make their experience better," he said.

"We have both formally structured and casual processes for understanding the customer perspective, and our customer base has an increasing propensity to travel - 60% of travel buyers were expecting more travel in this calendar year and two-thirds are anticipating a higher business travel spend, according to the Global Business Travel Association," Rologas added.

MEANWHILE, Amadeus has welcomed FCM Travel as new reseller partner of Cytric Easy.

Under the new deal, FCM corporate travel managers will have access to the benefits of Cytric Easy technology as part of the FCM solution portfolio.

Embedded in Microsoft 365, Cytric Easy allows users to book flights, accommodation, rail journeys and share travel details with colleagues without leaving the Microsoft Teams app. *AB*

Global biz travel tipped to hit record

THE business travel industry is forecast to hit record spend of US\$1.48 trillion by the end of the year, representing an increase on 2019 volumes, which was also a record at US\$1.43 trillion.

In further encouraging news, the same prediction put forward by the Global Business Travel Association (GBTA) suggests the sector will grow to more than US\$2 trillion by 2028.

"While projected spending... looking promising, we must remain vigilant and adaptive to potential headwinds in this period of stabilisation," GBTA CEO Suzanne Neufang cautioned.

Factors to consider include changing economic conditions and tech changes, Neufang said.

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Try our new Turkish delight



TURKISH Airlines has revealed the details of its new state-of-the-art business class suite at the Farnborough International Airshow 2024 in the UK.

The carrier stated its new Crystal Business Class suite marks a "new era for luxury air travel for business passengers", and is the first time Turkish Airlines has featured an adjustable suite door and panel for better privacy.

New seats in the suite feature a 23-inch seat width boasting increased footwell space with direct aisle access for all pax.

In line with the company's 'flow' brand identity, new suites also feature lighter and warmer colours, a marble-style table and rose gold finishes.

Developed by its subsidiary, TCI Aircraft Interiors, to create a unique business class offering, premium elements also include

plush leathers and fabrics - all sourced from Turkiye to emphasise the carrier's roots.

"Our new Crystal Business Class suite will add a new chapter for our long-haul luxury travel and will carry the airline into the future with a new level of comfort and privacy across our extensive global network," Turkish Airlines Chairman, Ahmet Bolat, enthused.

"The specially created design will complement our award-winning in-flight dining options for us to keep providing an unparalleled experience above the clouds for our guests."

The new suites are set to be featured on the carrier's transcontinental flights initially, before being rolled out on the airline's Airbus A350s on order, as well as planned retrofitting of its fleet of Boeing 777 aircraft. *AB*

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The tantalising sun of Tahiti makes for the perfect escape from winter, and **Paradise Discovered** has rolled out a selection of packages to make a holiday in Tahiti an opportunity not to be missed. Stay five nights at The Westin Bora Bora, with one night either side in Papeete, from \$7,949pp twin share, inclusive of return flights with Air Tahiti Nui, with an upgrade to an overwater bungalow at no extra cost. The deal also includes domestic flights in Tahiti. **CLICK HERE** to find out more about this deal, or **CLICK HERE** for a range of other amazing Tahitian holidays.

If you've ever had your eye on exploring the Mekong River, **CF Mekong River Cruises** has slashed \$1,444 off the price of the second traveller in a shared cabin on its eight-night Mekong cruise between Ho Chi Minh City and Siem Reap. The deal is valid for departure on 03 Jan 2025 and 19 Jan 2025. If you're a solo traveller, you can also take advantage of No Single Supplement on the same voyages, resulting in a discount of up to \$2,889. **CLICK HERE** to find out more.

Even if you're not attending a stadium event, Sydney Olympic Park provides plenty to see and do from Olympic Games history, expansive parkland and world-class facilities, while still being close by to the CBD. There's plenty happening in the region this winter, and **Accor** is offering 15% discount at any of its hotels in the burgeoning precinct. Stay at Pullman, Novotel or Ibis before 31 Aug to take advantage - **CLICK HERE**.

Agents can entice their clients to hop around Western Europe by rail with 20% off selected Eurostar routes available from **Rail Europe**. The discount applies to both Standard Premier and Comfort classes and is valid for bookings until 06 Aug and for departures from 03 Sep to 30 Oct across a range of routes. **CLICK HERE** to find out more.

Make the most of up to \$1,250 in airfare credit on balcony staterooms booked with **Swan Hellenic** in its 'Explore Further' promotion. Valid on a wide assortment of its 2025 expeditions, the price could be the missing link to get your clients to the Arctic, Mediterranean or South America. Bookings are open until 15 Oct. **CLICK HERE** for more information.

Cruise Traveller is offering savings of up to \$7,400 per couple on new bookings for Regent Seven Seas Cruises packages exploring Northern Europe if booked by 31 Aug. The exclusive 24-night package departs on 06 Jun 2025 and begins with a three-night adventure in Amsterdam prior to an 18-night luxury cruise to Copenhagen onboard the 490-passenger Seven Seas Navigator. **CLICK HERE** to find out more.

Travellers can save up to \$4,000 per couple on a range of tours and cruises of 10-days or more with **APT** by booking and paying in full 10 months out from departure. The 'Discover the World Sale' is valid on hundreds of 2025 and 2026 departures, such as the 17-day Eastern Canada and New England cruise holiday, if booked by 20 Aug 2024.

Meet Garwood of Galapagos



MELBOURNE-BASED Kevin Garwood from Classic Traveller has nothing but love for World Expeditions right now, named recently as the winner of the company's Galapagos Islands travel agent incentive.

As a reward for his sales efforts, Garwood is now off to explore the enchanting South American island group on a seven-day expedition on board the luxury yacht, *Solaris*.

Garwood's prize includes \$2,000 in airfare credit and guided hikes to encounter the Galapagos wildlife, including the famous giant tortoises.

World Expeditions Group CEO, Sue Badyari, said the incentive represented the brand's deep appreciation for travel agents who bring great experiences to their discerning clients.

"A visit to the Galapagos Islands is on the bucket list of many travel enthusiasts, and for most people represents a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity," she said.

"We're delighted for Kevin and thank him, and the many agents

who participated in this incentive, for their ongoing support of our active travel initiatives."

The prize was available to the agent who sold the most seats on scheduled itineraries with World Expeditions, Australian Cycle Tours, Australian Walking Holidays, Tasmanian Expeditions and UTracks. *ML*

Chartering to Vegas

AIR New Zealand is getting behind its NRL side, the New Zealand Warriors, as the team begins its 2025 season under the bright lights in Las Vegas.

The airline is now selling seats on a one-time return charter holiday package from Auckland direct to Sin City, inclusive of airfare, five nights accommodation at Park MGM and tickets to the Warriors' match against the Canberra Raiders, priced from \$4,999pp twin share.

The 'One NZ Warriors Grabaseat' promotion is on sale now, with the flight departing on 25 Feb, returning on 04 Mar.