

Today's issue of TD
Travel Daily today features six pages of the latest news including **Business Events News**, plus full pages from:

- Silversea
- Eva Airways

Silversea Journey
SILVERSEA has partnered with Constellation Journeys to offer a new 23-day Canada & New England package, which includes a 12-night luxury voyage on board the line's *Silver Shadow*.
The itinerary includes 10 nights' accommodation in New York, Toronto, Montreal and Quebec City - more details on **page seven**.

20 years of CT Partners

LAST night the industry turned out in force to celebrate the 20th birthday of the CT Partners consortium, with an event in Sydney honouring the group's longevity, continuity and proud traditions of full transparency.
The who's who of travel turned out for the gathering which included key supplier partners as well as high-profile former CT Partners chairs Barry Mayo and David Greenland, and seven of the founding members.
General Manager Matt Masson spoke of the impact of CT Partners, stating "we are here

tonight because of their courage and their commitment to setting up a group for independently owned travel companies.
"There was nothing like it in 2004, and I think the model they created is still unique today," he enthused, adding the fully transparent model allows CT Partners to "truly bring our suppliers into the family".
Masson said CT Partners continued to go from strength to strength, noting particularly that "2023 has been a hell of a rebound" as he announced the group's conference this year would be in Hoi An, Vietnam.

Guests included ATIA CEO Dean Long; Travelforce founder and CT Partners initial member Andrew Ross; ATPI's Sarah Bush and Peter Hosper; Mike Dwyer from Main Beach Travel; and several former CT Partners board members, including MP Travel's Kerri Primrose, whose business is now owned by Gray Dawes.
QF's Stephen Thompson was among several key airline partners present, along with cruise operators, hoteliers and other preferred suppliers.
House of Travel's Joe Araullo, who recently became CT Partners Chairman (**TD 28 Feb**), also addressed the crowd and led a tribute to former long-time GM, the late Ian Edwards, as well as other departed members including Tim Murphy from Media Travel and Wentworth Travel's Bev Cohen. *BP*


Easter hols strike
EASTER holiday travel plans may be thrown into turmoil if a threat to strike by the United Firefighters Union goes ahead.
Aviation rescue firefighters may walk off the job from Good Fri in the pursuit of a better pay deal with Airservices Australia.




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FCTG boosts Leisure team

FLIGHT Centre Travel Group (FCTG) has bolstered its executive and supply credentials through two high-profile appointment this morning (**TD** breaking news).

The CEO of the recently acquired Scott Dunn brand (**TD** 31 Jan 2023), Sonia Davies, has been added to the company's Global Leisure executive team, where she will continue to hold her role as Chief Executive Officer of the premium UK-based division.

Meanwhile, Flight Centre New Zealand MD, Victoria Courtney, will add to her duties after accepting the role of Global Leisure Supply Leader.

Both executives will report directly to Global Leisure Chief Executive, James Kavanagh, lending more experience to his expanding leisure team which already boasts Andrew Stark,

Dani Galloway, Belinda Rafiee, Christopher Steiner, Alissa O'Connell and Joell Ogilvie.

Kavanagh said the recruits will help FCTG's strategic positioning in the supply & luxury segments.

"The incredible relationships we have with our suppliers make FCTG what it is and Victoria's new role as custodian of them elevate the partner-led approach we believe in," Kavanagh said.

"Sonia's wealth of experience... will enhance our plays in the fast growing and highly lucrative sector and will also give us a strong presence in the Northern Hemisphere," he added.

Davies added that she was keen to assist them FCTG Leisure team in identifying more opportunities for collaboration. **AB**

Learn Taiwan & win

DISCOVER the beauty of Taiwan via the latest education module on Eva Air's online training platform and go into the running to win a range of prizes.

See **page seven** for more info.

Gaskin on The Chat

THE latest episode of *The Chat with Jenny* is out now, so grab a cup of tea and settle in to listen to Hawaii Tourism Oceania's Jennifer Gaskin tell Jenny all about her role at The Walshe Group, as well as her life and career - listen to the podcast episode **HERE**.

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NTIAs return to Sydney

THE National Travel Industry Awards (NTIAs) will return to Sydney this year after being hosted in Melbourne for the first time in 14 years in 2023 (*TD* breaking news yesterday).

The Australian Travel Industry Association's (ATIA) jewel in the crown awards event will be hosted at ICC Sydney, while Singapore Airlines has also returned as the major sponsor.

"The NTIAs represent the best of the best in the travel industry, and ATIA is excited to host this year's gala event in partnership with Singapore Airlines," AITA CEO, Dean Long, said.

"With 2024 already a massive year for travel, we will be definitely ready to celebrate by Oct so keep the 25th and 26th free and expect many more exciting announcements as we lead up to the event," he added.

The highly successful Fri night networking and finalists'



celebrations will also return.

Pictured: Mickey Mann, The Travel Corporation; Candice Steffensen; Eliana Martinez; Jenny Le, ATIA National Manager Events & Corporate Partners; Helen Courias, Holland America Line; and ATIA CEO Dean Long. *AB*

Brisbane going bold

BRISBANE has launched a new domestic tourism campaign urging Aussies to rediscover what the evolving city has to offer.

The campaign will be targeted at NSW and Vic, with the city's new hotels taking centre stage.

APT sells out of Ama

APT has confirmed it has divested its remaining stake in AmaWaterways, with American multinational equity firm L Catterton purchasing the equity.

The decision to sell follows a move by APT to go its own way on European river cruising to better cater to Aussie pax, with AmaWaterways establishing an Australia office (*TD* 17 Aug 2023).

For the full details of the story, see today's *Cruise Weekly*.

A Vista to the world

OCEANIA Cruises will offer its 2026 Around the World Voyage aboard its newest ship, *Vista*, which is scheduled to visit 43 countries in 180 days.

The boutique vessel will set sail from Miami on 06 Jan 2026 to explore Southeast Asia and Australia, the South Pacific islands, Europe and America.

Bookings for the global sailing open 14 Mar.



Window Seat

CT PARTNERS pulled out all stops for last night's 20th anniversary celebrations (see **p1**), making sure attendees felt very much at home at the event's Sydney venue.

There was even a personalised keepsake, with each guest's place set with a monogrammed napkin, courtesy of GM Matt Masson who had the customised napery (**pictured**) made in Hoi An, Vietnam last week while researching the group's 2024 conference venue.



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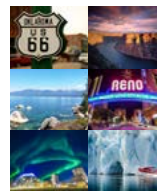
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Ascott nabs Sydney Central



THE Ascott Limited has taken over management of Sydney Central Hotel (pictured), bringing the Singapore-based operator closer to its target of 30 properties in Australia by 2030.

Located in the heart of Haymarket along The Goods Line and close to Central railway station, the 255-key hotel will be refurbished and rebranded under the Citadines brand.

Sydney Central offers a mix of standard, superior and executive rooms, with amenities including full-service restaurant and bar, a heated rooftop pool, a gym, 12 event spaces and a ballroom, as well as a 24/7 carpark.

“Sydney Central marks another exciting chapter of growth for Ascott Australia,” Managing Director, David Mansfield, said.

“We will further capitalise on the dynamic location of Sydney Central by adding a cafe along

The Goods Line and expand the room count by 72 keys across eight floors.”

The refurbishment will also include accessible rooms and family suites before the property is formally rebranded to Citadines Sydney Central. *JM*

QF \$10m for the Reef

QANTAS has committed \$10m over the next decade to combat climate change damage inflicted on the Great Barrier Reef.

Part of an extension of the carrier’s tie-up with the Great Barrier Reef Foundation, the funds will support scientists, Traditional Owners and tourism operators in restoring coral.

Four major projects will be funded over the next four years coinciding with the release of the carrier’s *Nature Action Plan* - view the report [HERE](#).

VA plans for pets

VIRGIN Australia is preparing to follow the lead of several North American carriers and allow pets to board its flights.

In a plan unveiled today, the policy will be limited to small cats and dogs on specific domestic routes, and they will be restricted to a limited number of rows.

Pets will also be prohibited from roaming freely or sitting on pax laps, and must travel inside an approved pet carrier beneath the seat in front of the owner.

No date has been set for implementation, but the move follows survey data which suggest Aussies would support the idea.

QR on Traveport+

QATAR Airways’ NDC content and enhanced servicing capabilities are now available via the Traveport+ platform.

The move means agency customers in Australia can access a wider range of rich content, fares, and unique offerings from the airline in one place.

“Our NDC collaboration with Traveport ensures that travel agents around the globe can effortlessly shop and book our growing repertoire of NDC offers and provide exceptional service to our customers, including post-ticketing,” said Matt Raos, SVP, Global Sales at Qatar Airways.

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VIVID BRAND PARTNERS WANTED

DESTINATION NSW has put the call out for leading brands to help shape world-renowned Vivid Sydney festival, with the event seeking commercial partners.

The DMO has partnered with global sports, events and representation company, IMG, to enlist brand partners to help boost Vivid's international exposure and world-class programming.

"Vivid Sydney is Australia's largest event, attended by millions of people each year from across Australia and the world and features boundary-pushing artists, thinkers, musicians, and culinary experts," Destination NSW CEO, Steve Cox, said.

"Vivid Sydney is at the forefront of major int'l events by continually presenting a unique, diverse, and evolving range of experiences.

"The fresh ideas, perspectives, and creative opportunities our



commercial partners bring to Vivid Sydney play a critical role in its continual evolution."

IMG SVP, Asia Pacific and Managing Director, Australia and NZ, Chris Gilbert, said "Vivid Sydney offers companies and brands an incredibly compelling promotional and engagement platform from which to promote their brands at scale.

"We are excited to work with Destination NSW to further unlock the intrinsic partnership value that accompanies such a special community event."

Vivid Sydney 2024 will light up the city for 23 nights from 24 May-15 Jun, with this year's iteration themed 'Vivid Sydney, Humanity' - more info [HERE](#). JM

Cvent backs MEA

MEETINGS & Events

Australia (MEA) has announced Cvent as the sponsor for the 'Event of the Year' and the 'Venue' categories of the 2023 MEA Awards, marking the first time the event tech supplier has sponsored the program.

Taking place on 13 Jun after MEA's Evolve conference at Rydges Resort Hunter Valley (TD 18 Jan), the National Awards Dinner will recognise the best of Australia's events industry throughout 2023 over seven categories.

MEA CEO Peter McDonald said he was pleased to announce the partnership, and expressed gratitude to Cvent for its support, which he added "speaks volumes about the reputation of our Awards in the industry".

ICC Sydney embraces its sweet tooth

THE International Convention Centre Sydney (ICC) has unveiled new indulgent dessert offerings, now available on its 2024 Menu Collection.

The mouth-watering treats are crafted from sustainable and local ingredients, with gluten and dairy-free options also on offer.

Delegates can enjoy selections such as baked Valrhona white chocolate cheesecake with Indigenous peppercorn and



strawberry compote, Caramelia chocolate and Indigenous plum choux bun or Sacher torte with Davidson's plum.

ICC also offers customised dessert stations for major brands and global events.

MCG Signature

MCG Events has introduced a new range of Signature products and experiences for 2024, headlined by a new sky-high dining concept.

'Dinner in Sky' is a bespoke table elevated 35 metres into the air, taking in the Melbourne CBD skyline, and is available to book now.

There are also Signature upgrades on offer for seated events, including 1853 Gin cocktails served on arrival.

Mums meet in Tas

MORE than 250 women from rural Australia convened in Launceston for the inaugural Motherland Conference last week, supported by the Business Events Attraction Fund.

Founded in 2019 by Business Events Tasmania (BET) visionary, Stephanie Trethewey, Motherland is a national charity that supports rural mums across Australia.

The event aimed to reduce isolation and foster meaningful connections, while speakers such as journalist Jessica Rowe offered inspiration to attendees.

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Outrigger Resorts & Hotels has named **Luana Maitland** as its new Area Director of Cultural Experiences for the company's Outrigger Reef Waikiki Beach Resort and Outrigger Waikiki Beach Resort. Maitland will be responsible for organising the nightly entertainment for guests, as well as the Surfers In Residence program at the resorts.

Karen Dowling has started her role as the Strategic Trade Partnerships Manager Queensland/South Australia/Northern Territory/Western Australia at **Total Holiday Options Australia**. She was most recently the Business Partnership Manager Qld at TravelManagers for 14 years, where she managed, mentored, and coached PTMs and helped encourage sales growth within the network.

Based in Dubai, **Oliviero Cassini** has become the new Chief Development Officer, EMEA at **The Lux Collective**. Cassini's day-to-day duties include leading the expansion of the company's four distinctive brands across the Middle East, Africa, Europe and South America. The Italian national boasts two decades of experience in the luxury hospitality industry, including his most recent role as Director of Development at Red Sea Global, a leading Saudi real estate company.

Bringing over three decades of experience to her new role, **Joanie Ning** has become **The Langham, Melbourne's** new Executive Housekeeper. Ning has spent more than 20 years specialising in housekeeping management, and joins the establishment from an identical position at One and Only Wolgan Valley Resort Blue Mountains. She is tasked with maintaining The Langham's exceptional standards of cleanliness and guest satisfaction.

The **Australian Travel Agents Co-operative (ATAC)** has welcomed **Georgina Randall** back to the organisation in the newly created position of Member Services & Development Manager. She was previously ATAC's Business Co-ordinator for five years before transitioning to CRC Recruitment & Travel Jobs in 2021. She later joined Entourage Travel Group as Business Support Manager.

With the goal of strengthening the hotelier's leadership development in the APAC region, **Hilton Hotels & Resorts** has announced two key executive appointments. **Nong Xia** has become the President of Development for Greater China & Mongolia, while **Maria Ariizumi** will step up as the group's Vice President of Development for South East Asia. Xia carries extensive experience in the industry with tenures at H World Group, Starwood, and Hyatt, to name just a few, and will be responsible for expanding Hilton's portfolio in Greater China. Meanwhile, Ariizumi will spearhead the hotelier's ambitious growth in South East Asia over the next three years in the new VP role, drawing on the extensive knowledge she acquired through her time with companies like Swire Hotels and Marriott International.

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Collette dines high for Jaclyn



COLLETTE celebrated new Chief Executive Officer Jaclyn Leibl-Cote's first visit to Australia (**TD** 05 Mar) last night with a sky-high dining experience at Luke's Table inside the south-east pylon of the Sydney Harbour Bridge.

The Collette team was joined by well-known guests from across the industry (**pictured**) as celebrity chef Luke Mangan created a stunning three-course menu paired with Penfolds wines.

Leibl-Cote said Australia held a special place in her heart and that the Australian team had done a great job to date.

The new Swiss miss

SWITZERLAND Tourism has welcomed Lauren Thomas to its Sydney team this week as the organisation's new Marketing Manager for the Australia and New Zealand markets.

No stranger to travel, Thomas has taken on the peaks and plains of Switzerland's tourism appeal after spending a stint at Destination Gold Coast, where she had been for 18 months.

Thomas will be based in Switzerland Tourism's Bondi Junction office in Sydney's east.

Travel Daily
The Chat
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A conversation with **Jennifer Gaskin**

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