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## Today's issue of TD

*Travel Daily* today features seven pages of the latest news including **Business Events News**, plus a cover wrap from **Oceania Cruises** and full pages from:

- Silversea
- Infinity Holidays

## Uniworld Super Ship

**UNIWORLD** Boutique River Cruises will add a new Super Ship to its European fleet in 2026.

The new-build *S.S. Emilie* was inspired by Austrian painter Gustav Klimt's life partner and will be the sixth Super Ship added to Uniworld's global fleet in the past five years alone.

It will join its sister vessels *S.S. Victoria* and *S.S. Elisabeth* in the line's European fleet.

## Looking beyond borders

**THE** ongoing resilience of the Australian travel industry and emerging trends to capitalise on in 2025 will be two of the key topics discussed at ATIA's maiden summit, which will be held in Sydney on 25 Oct.

Entitled 'Beyond Borders', the one-day summit will take place 24 hours before the 2024 edition of the National Travel Industry Awards (NTIA) gala ceremony.

Taking charge of the event as host will be ATIA Director of Membership, Richard Taylor, who will be joined by Charlie Trevena from Destination Webinars and Travel Agent Achievers impresario, Roslyn Ranse.

The event has already secured a strong line-up of speakers including Flight Centre Travel Group CEO Graham 'Skroo' Turner; Norwegian Cruise Line VP APAC, Ben Angell; Globus Family of Brands MD, Gai Tyrrell; TTC Tour Brands MD, Toni Ambler and Corporate Travel Management's Laura Ruffles, who this week stepped down from her role with the company (*TD* yesterday).

ATIA CEO, Dean Long (**pictured**), said the association's summit represents a major milestone for



the industry.

"Beyond Borders will delve into the robust resurgence of travel and the exciting emerging trends for 2025," Long said.

"It promises to be an incubator for innovation, collaboration, and celebration, encapsulating the dynamic spirit of the industry".

ATIA said it anticipates more than 400 industry professionals from across Australia will attend the summit, and that it will also host NTIA finalists on the day.

Tickets for the remaining places will be on sale shortly. *ML*

## Ama answers the call

**AMAWATERWAYS** has officially launched its Australian call centre, with travel agents now able to access a local reservations team and river cruise inventory priced in AUD and NZD.

Agents can call AmaWaterways' new local number - 1800 867 126 - between 8am and 5pm Mon-Fri to speak to local team members, who have received training on aspects popular with local travellers, including 14-night itineraries and local brochures.

## More from Oceania

**OCEANIA** Cruises has slashed up to 40% off selected sailings for bookings made by 01 Apr.

For more details, see the **front page** of *Travel Daily* today.

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## JQ adds to Top End

**JETSTAR** will increase weekly services during high-demand periods on a number of Darwin routes between Apr and Oct.

In total the added capacity on Darwin services to Sydney, Brisbane and Adelaide will add 32,000 new low fares seats over coming months.

Qantas' low-cost carrier will also add 22,000 seats to its Sydney to Uluru route, which will see two extra services added a week.

In further news, Jetstar will upgrade from A320 to larger A321ceo aircraft between Darwin and Melbourne from 03 Jul, as well as operate larger Airbus A321neo LR - the newest aircraft in Jetstar's fleet - between Darwin and Bali and Adelaide from 02 Aug - bookings for the added capacity are now live.

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## Record OTA spend

**FOUR** of the largest online travel agencies in the world spent a record amount on marketing in 2023 in a bid to leverage pent-up demand following the pandemic.

The financial records of Expedia Group, Booking Holdings, Airbnb and Trip.com Group show the OTAs splashed a whopping US\$16.8 billion on sales and marketing last year, up by 20% on the US\$14 billion spent in 2022.

According to a Phocuswire report, the rapidly rising numbers suggest competition between the OTAs is rising sharply in light of an increase in bookings globally.

Another factor leading to higher marketing budgets is the desire to compete with suppliers such as hotels and airlines, many of which have invested heavily in recent years to drive direct sales.

## Emissions a barrier for TA

**CARBON** emissions from travel, particularly flying, will increasingly shape the discussion when it comes to how far people travel for leisure, Tourism Australia Managing Director Phillipa Harrison believes.

Speaking on stage at the beginning of the organisation's annual Destination Australian conference in Sydney, Harrison said travellers were much more willing to reconsider visiting a destination based on the impact their trip will have on emissions.

"Our individual impact as we travel is becoming clearer.

"Travel brands and aggregators are publishing carbon emissions and comparisons between different types of travel options," Harrison said in her address.

The Tourism Australia chief cited data from Skyscanner which said 159 million people had selected lower emission flights since 2019.

As such, Australia's isolation by geography may prove itself to be a barrier that will require some careful manoeuvring.

"Consumer preferences are changing, led by the younger

cohort who want to travel more sustainably - 71% of people are saying they will travel more sustainably next year, that's up 10% from 2021," Harrison said.

But at the same time, Harrison said the concept of distance was changing, with rapid advances in aircraft on the way which will positively impact Australia's perceived distance in the future.

"As consumer preferences change, we need to promote ourselves to that cohort who are higher spending but they're also much more principled, so we need to make sure that we adapt to their changing preferences." *ML*

## BWH value signings

**THREE** new hotels in Sydney and Brisbane have joined BWH Hotels under its SureStay value brand, with conversion work now scheduled or underway.

The Brisbane signing will lead to the opening of the SureStay Studio extended stay label, while both Sydney properties, located in the CBD and St Leonards, will be completed later this year.

## Pelikin strategies

**DIGITAL** travel money card Pelikin has elevated David Hughes to the role of Head of Strategy to help drive the product into its next stage of development.

Prior to his new role, Hughes was a member of Pelikin's Advisory Board and played a key role in forming new partnerships to help grow Pelikin's market share across the travel trade.

With his new duties, Hughes will also maintain his existing roles as Managing Director of Encourage Travel and Uniglobe Asia Pacific.

"Under David's guidance, we're not just growing; we're evolving to meet the future head-on," said Pelikin CEO Sam Brown.

Pelikin is expected to unveil a range of new products by Jun, which will help it cater to a wider spectrum of travellers.

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## NCL finds TIME to host



**NORWEGIAN** Cruise Line recently hosted more than 30 members of the Travel Industry Mentor Experience (TIME) community for an exclusive experience on board *Norwegian Spirit* in a recent call in Sydney.

The informative gathering was hosted by NCL Director of Field Sales ANZ Angela Middleton, alongside the line's VP and MD APAC Ben Angell and Director of Sales ANZ Damian Borg.

Several NCL team members who

are part of the TIME program were on hand to discuss the benefits of being part of the TIME community, while guests also enjoyed a tour of *Spirit* and al fresco cocktails and leisurely three-course lunch.

"The TIME program is so worthwhile and not only continues to attract an increasing number of industry participants, but several members of our team have also completed the program and continue to be involved," Middleton said.

"As part of our ongoing partnership with TIME we are thrilled to be able to offer a scholarship program in both Australia and New Zealand."

NCL also revealed it will soon announce its NZ scholarship winner with Australia set to follow in the coming months.

**Pictured** preparing to board the ship are: Kristina Sambaher, Ponant; Tahlia Shaw; NCL; and Alice Ager, Uniworld Boutique River Cruises. *AB*

## HA second bag fee

**HAWAIIAN** Airlines is allowing one less complimentary checked bag on board its flights for economy and extra comfort pax.

The carrier confirmed only one 23kg piece of luggage can now be checked in for free, with A\$150 to be charged for a second bag.

## UA appeal to Airbus

**UNITED** Airlines CEO Scott Kirby says he has instructed Boeing to stop building its order of 277 B737 MAX 10 aircraft and switch to the smaller MAX 9 variant.

Addressing a JPMorgan investor conference, Kirby said certification of the Boeing 737 MAX 10 is likely to take years, hampered by a spate of high-profile incidents.

Kirby suggested he was open to discussions with Airbus for its A321 model to replace part of the existing Boeing order.

"We are in the market for A321s, and if we get a deal where the economics work, we'll do something - if we don't, we won't and will wind up with more Max-9s," Kirby said.

Earlier this year, Kirby said UA was removing the MAX 10 from its internal plans (*TD* 25 Jan).

## CLIA appoints green expert

**CRUISE** Lines International Association (CLIA) Global has appointed a marine engineering and consultancy to help the cruise sector develop greater clarity around current and future green fuel developments.

The Italian-based RINA has secured the contract this week to carry out a Global Investment Plan Study, which will help inform the real-time energy needs, infrastructure and regulations needed to lower carbon emissions through to 2050.

RINA confirmed its brief will be to provide analysis globally for

the cruise sector, including the status and future innovations in fuel infrastructure over the next five to 10 years.

"A significant emphasis will be placed on the impact of itineraries and operations of cruise ships, considering various energy carriers both in navigation and at port," the agency said.

Further areas of study will include an evaluation of onshore power infrastructure, greenhouse gas regulatory frameworks and their impact on ship design, as well as estimates of the volume of energy carriers required to meet decarbonisation targets.

Various propulsion options for cruise ships will also be explored, alongside locations and sizes of cruise infrastructure. *AB*

## Vale David Bunn

**THE** travel and cruise industry is this week mourning the passing of David Bunn, who passed away in New Zealand on Tue.

Bunn's career spanned almost 40 years, and he is remembered for spearheading the promotion of Orient Lines, Voyages of Discovery and Oceania Cruises in the Australian market.

## Quest Woolooware

**THE** Ascott Limited has opened the doors to its newest Quest Apartment Hotels property in the Sutherland Shire, south of Sydney.

The 71-apartment property features in the new Woolooware Bay Town Centre development, with some apartments featuring views over the adjacent Pointsbet Stadium - home ground of the NRL's Cronulla Sharks.

The property features a mix of studio, one-, two- and three-bedroom apartments along with a number of accessible options.

Ascott Australia said the light-filled apartments are designed to maximise the ocean views, with timber and light sand colours combining to create a homely feel.

Public facilities at Woolooware Bay Town Centre include a shopping centre, waterfront parklands, outdoor fitness spaces and a short walk to Wanda Beach.

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## Book now or miss out

**LUXURY** travel advisors have been encouraged to advise their clients to book early or miss out on their ideal itinerary, such is the speed of luxury travel bookings.

Virtuoso Executive VP, David Kolner, told delegates at the 2024 Virtuoso Forum, “we looked at forward booking trends for Virtuoso - preferred hotels in 2024 and we are already seeing that the average daily rate (ADR) is 10-15% higher than 2023.

“This is concerning only because I think a lot of people were hoping maybe the wait was over and pricing was going to come down,” he added.

Kolner observed that the market was reflecting that people are booking higher rates and that those rates were rising.

With the ADR already so much higher than it was a year ago, Kolner suggested it was going to be a more expensive year.

“There are two messages for

clients that I think are important; one, don’t sit around and wait thinking that the price will fall - that is really not going to happen, and secondly, if you really want something specific on the higher end and rare, those are likely being booked early so you really can’t wait,” he said.

There is currently a 12% increase worldwide on advanced bookings, indicating the message to book early was sinking in.

Abercrombie & Kent’s Managing Director, Debra Fox, agreed the early booking trend was real.

“If consumers don’t plan and book in advance, two things happen - the price keeps going up...because demand is much greater than inventory, and if they miss out, they need to compromise and have a plan B.”

She added there were specific reasons why people were waiting to book, including nervousness around geopolitical instability. *DF*

## APT boosts Antarctic

**TRAVELLERS** will soon have the chance to explore the Antarctic with APT, which has just announced its 2026 program, in partnership with Seabourn.

The luxurious 10-night charter cruise will take place aboard *Seabourn Venture*, supported by a 24-person expedition team.

## Collette incentive

**COLLETTE** is offering agents a \$100 Prezzy voucher for every booking taken in Mar.

All bookings made and deposited this month for tours departing through to 31 Mar 2025 qualify for the incentive.

“We value travel consultants and want to see them succeed,” explained Collette Chief Executive Officer Jaelyn Leibl-Cote.

“This offer is one more way for us to show them our appreciation when they provide their customers with their expertise in planning a dream holiday.”

## Kakadu experiences

**KAKADU** Tourism has released a raft of new experiences for its 2024 season.

These include Kakadu adventure tours, overnight Indigenous cultural experiences at the Kakadu Billabong Safari Camp, pop-up tent experiences and cruising through the world-famous Yellow Water Billabong with Indigenous-owned company, Yellow Water Cruises.

In addition, bookings made through Tourism Top End for accommodation at Mercure Kakadu Crocodile Hotel, Cooina Lodge and Yellow Water Campground will receive a 25% discount, and bookings must be completed by 30 Apr.

Kakadu Tourism is a fully Indigenous-owned tourism and hospitality organisation, which operates Mercure Kakadu Crocodile Hotel, Cooina Lodge, Yellow Water Camping Ground, Yellow Water Cruises and a range of tour services.

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## Cathay's cabin spruce-up



**CATHAY** Pacific has revamped the interiors of its Boeing 777-300ER fleet, unveiling an all-new Aria Suite, as well as a new premium economy and refreshed economy class.

The Aria Suite now features a privacy door and sliding partition, personalised suite lighting, and new tech including a 24-inch 4K monitor, and Bluetooth and wireless charging options.

The premium economy cabin has also been updated, with travellers now able to enjoy a 15.6-inch 4K monitor, generous recline and legroom, and a personal reading light.

Meanwhile, the refreshed economy cabin focuses on comfort with "contemporary materials and a distinctly modern touch", and offers Bluetooth connectivity. *JM*

## Hawai'i seeks views

A **SURVEY** inviting "anyone with an interest in Hawai'i tourism" to shape the governance and management of the state's tourism future has been launched by the Hawai'i Tourism Authority.

The public poll (**CLICK HERE**) seeks to obtain views on how Hawai'i should manage its tourism industry for success.

Responses gathered from the survey will be used to determine whether an alternate governance structure is needed to manage Hawai'i's tourism objectives, pitch new policy ideas and identify areas needing reform.

Hawai'i Tourism Authority Chairman, Mufi Hannemann, said tourism remains the state's top economic driver, fostering jobs and career growth.

"We must continue to evaluate our current systems, adapt to improve efficiencies, and plan ahead to sustain a vibrant industry and future Hawai'i," Hannemann said.



## Window Seat

**PLENTY** of jobs around the world require relocation, but not too many we assume need new employees to live in the frozen world of Antarctica.

The UK Antarctic Heritage Trust is on the hunt for "hard-working, self-motivated individuals" to staff a post office at Port Lockroy, a remote British research outpost on the continent.

Three roles are up for grabs, presumably to inexperienced candidates, to sort postcards and other mail from Nov 2024 to Mar 2025.

And if you think it's easy money for easy work - think again - as the office processes up to 80,000 letters and cards each season, sent largely by visiting cruise ship passengers.

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## Glass joins ABEA

**THE** Australian Business Events Association (ABEA) has welcomed ICC Sydney's Samantha Glass to its Board.

Glass (**pictured**), who is the convention centre's Director of Corporate Affairs, Communication and Sustainability, takes over from Cairns Convention Centre GM Janet Hamilton.

ABEA Board Chairman, Peter King, said "we are very excited to be able to draw on Glass's passion for sustainable development and brand leadership".



## 'WORK FROM ANYWHERE' PLAN

**TOURISM** Australia is planning to capitalise on the global 'work from anywhere' trend to drive future MICE promotional activity, particularly as it relates to visitors adding leisure time to an event.

Welcoming delegates yesterday at the 2024 'Destination Australia' conference in Sydney, Tourism Australia Managing Director, Phillipa Harrison, said Australia was well placed "to reap the rewards" of the returning and rebounding MICE sector.

According to its internal market research, Harrison said business events were a premium demand driver, with the average visitor spending 74% more than exclusive leisure visitors.

"There was a recent study that said 60% of meeting and convention attendees are likely to extend for leisure purposes in the next year," Harrison said.



As a further boost, the study showed two-thirds of delegates travelling to Australia for a business event were also likely to bring their partner or a travel companion to extend their stay.

"The business events themselves are a great business but there's also an incredible leisure opportunity as well," the Tourism Australia chief enthused. The meetings and events sector

is one of eight 'focal points' that Tourism Australia has identified in its primary 2024 strategy, with research showing business event visitors were also likely to visit Australia a second time in future.

Tourism Australia will host leading meeting planners later this year in Cairns at its new MICE-focused destination event 'Australia Next', which replaces the former Dreamtime event. *ML*

## Canberra planner

**THE** Canberra Convention Bureau has published its *2024 Canberra Meeting Planners Guide*, which offers information on the region's venues, institutions and experiences.

Spanning more than 100 pages, the guide includes dedicated sections on hosting sustainable and accessible events in the capital city, as well support and resources for event organisers.

There are also details on Canberra's transport options, its Indigenous culture and experiences, and much more.

## EventsAir delivers at ASEAN Summit

**AUSTRALIAN** tech company EventsAir assisted with the security at last week's ASEAN-Australia Summit, where Prime Minister Anthony Albanese hosted a dozen key Southeast Asian leaders in Melbourne.

In total, there were more than 6,500 attendees, including diplomats, academics, officials, media and police, all of whom needed to be accredited before having access to the locked-down Melbourne Convention &

Exhibition Centre (MCEC).

More than 10 EventsAir team members worked with the ASEAN Task Force since Jul 2023 to review and process every approved attendee and then issue secure credentials to provide streamlined access to the MCEC, whilst maintaining the high security perimeter.

EventsAir CEO Chris Ridd said "everything ran so smoothly... and, from a technical standpoint, it was flawless".

## Pan Pacific gongs

**PAN** Pacific Melbourne took home two awards at the fourth annual World MICE Awards Gala Ceremony in Qatar last week.

The property was declared Oceania's Best 'MICE Hotel 2023', as well as 'Australia's Best MICE Hotel 2023'.

It's not the first time the hotel has been recognised for its business events offerings - it was also named 'Australia's Best MICE Hotel' in 2022.

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## APPOINTMENTS

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**Orbit World Travel** has appointed sales expert **Suzanne Quinn** as its new Head of Sales. Bringing more than 15 years worth of experience in global market management across the APAC region, she joins the company with an plenty of expertise in the travel industry. Quinn will strive to increase the business' revenue with her innovation of Orbit World's sales strategies.

**Stephen Mahoney** is now the General Manager of Visitor Economy Strategy Review at **Destination NSW**. He has been with the destination management organisation for more than six-and-a-half years, with his previous role being General Manager Policy, Product & Engagement. Before joining Destination NSW, he had served as Etihad Airways' Head of Corporate Communications Australia & Asia.

**Stephen Hollow** has taken charge of operations at **QT Canberra** as its new General Manager. Relocating from Western Australia where he was GM of QT Perth, the experienced hotel manager will bring new level of "enthusiasm and expertise" to the Canberra property. Hollow's leadership delivered exceptional services and success at the award-winning property in the Western Australian capital.

**Chris le Roux** has begun a new role as Sales Manager Australia at **Heritage Expeditions**, with the experienced sales executive bringing more than 20 years of travel industry experience to the business. Le Roux has held several senior ole in travel, including stints at Adventure World, Contiki, On The Go Tours, and Globus.

**Tomasi Turukawa** has been promoted to General Manager at the **Nanuku Resort Fiji**. Born and raised in the region, Turukawa will bring key local knowledge to the role, along with near 20 years of hospitality experience. His most recent job at the hotel was Director of Rooms and Resort Manager. Turukawa will now oversee the resort's day-to-day operations, management, training, and guest satisfaction.

**Seabourn** has named Mike Fulkerson as its new Vice President and Chief Marketing Officer. In this role, he will oversee overall marketing strategy, brand management and performance, public relations and communications. Fulkerson brings more than 20 years of hospitality, wellness, and consumer marketing experience to the position. He will report to Natalya Leahy, President of Seabourn.

**Jumeirah Group** has announced the appointment of **Michael Grieve** as its new Chief Brand Officer, responsible for spearheading the evolution of the brand as part of its 'Mission 2030' strategy. Formerly the Vice President Brand and Client for luxury brand Gucci, Grieve will join the business from next month. Originally from New Zealand, his 16-year career has spanned senior marketing roles for a list of blue chip brands such as BMW, Adidas and Nike.



## CX profits skyrocket

**HONG** Kong's reopening has translated into a huge turnaround in the fortunes of Cathay Pacific, which posted a 16,412% reversal of its 2023 annual financial result. Group-wide revenue for Cathay was HKD\$94.5 billion, up 85.1% on 2022, based on a 326% jump in available seat kilometres.

## Vote on Disneyland

**PLANNING** officials in Anaheim will this week vote on a proposed redevelopment of Disneyland which will see new attractions, shopping and dining introduced. The 'DisneylandForward' plan seeks to future-proof the theme park for years to come by rezoning undeveloped parts of the precinct's existing footprint.

Under the plan, Disneyland said it wants to build new themed attractions alongside hotels located on Disneyland Drive and where the current Toy Story parking area stands.

Disney is also seeking to gain full development rights to build new park attractions, including rides, hotels and dining areas on its own property without submitting to city planning processes.

The entertainment giant is eager to purchase the Magic Way road from the city of Anaheim to cater for its expansion plans.

Disney noted it will spend US\$2 billion on the resort over the next 10 years under the proposal, as well as commit \$100 million to new city streets, green space and affordable housing.

If the proposal is given the green light by the Anaheim Planning Commission, it will then proceed to a vote by the Anaheim City Council next month.

## QR Irish codeshare

**QATAR** Airways has entered into a new codeshare agreement with Irish flag carrier Aer Lingus, unlocking single-ticket access to a wider range of destinations across the UK and Ireland.

The deal will open seamless connectivity from QR flights to Dublin, Manchester and London to Aer Lingus flights in Ireland.

Once in full effect, Qatar Airways will hold a codeshare deal with all International Airlines Group carriers.



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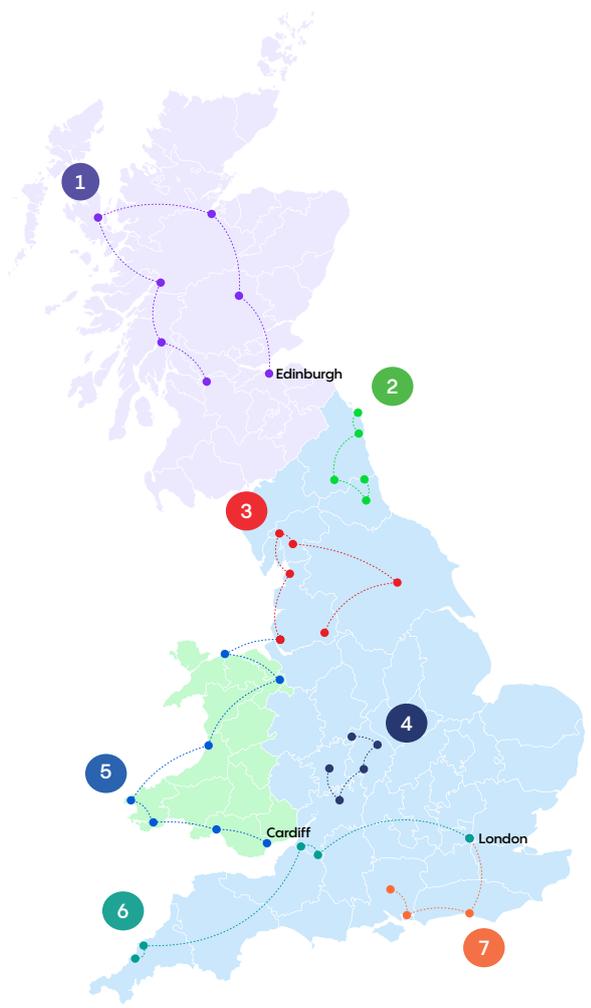
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