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Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today features seven pages of the latest industry news including **Business Events News**, plus a full page from **Canuckiwi**.

Entire incentive

ENTIRE Travel Group has unveiled an exclusive Rocky Mountaineer incentive, rewarding travel advisors with a \$100 digital Mastercard for each holiday package booked before the end of this month.

The agent incentive applies to all Entire Rocky Mountaineer holiday packages, which combine the iconic North American rail journey with accommodation in some of Canada's top resorts, along with a variety of additional tours and transport options including an Alaska cruise add-on.

The incentive applies to any booking made for travel this year, with all packages able to be booked through Entire.

New WebBeds trade site

WEBJET Limited is preparing to roll out a new booking platform for its WebBeds B2B channel featuring a range of upgrades to enhance the booking experience of travel agents.

The new platform was unveiled in a dedicated WebBeds Strategy Day presentation as one of three major elements in a growth plan to increase Total Transaction Value (TTV) five-fold to \$10 billion annually by 2030.

Artificial Intelligence will play a major role in the new site in the form of an AI travel advisor designed to deliver "an interactive, personable interaction" for agents.

Upgrades to the WebBeds Global Marketplace will also see an improved User Experience with a stronger search engine.

Room descriptions will also be more detailed in search results, with larger images and better descriptions of room categories.

It's unclear if the new trade portal will be formally launched or quietly integrated into the existing infrastructure.

From a financial perspective, the strategy presentation showed WebBeds is on track to deliver \$4 billion in TTV over the full financial year, increasing to \$5bn a year later and doubling by 2030.

The company plans to do this through investment in technology and expansion of the platform into new geographic regions.

Further growth is expected via a greater focus on independent hotels, which use portals such as WebBeds for distribution which lowers guest acquisition costs. *ML*

Sell USA your way

PLACES on five famils to the USA are up for grabs via a new 'Sell your way to the USA' agent incentive - more information on **page eight** of today's *Travel Daily*.

On the road again

BKB Holidays is hitting the eastern states with a series of fun and informative roadshows, along with key travel partners.

The events will be held in Brisbane on 13 May, Sydney on 14 May, and Melbourne on 16 May, with drinks and canapes to be provided on the night.

The tour operator will be joined by a variety of key partners, including **COMO** Hotels & Resorts, **Scout**, **Kimberley Quest**, **Journey Beyond**, **Sealink**, **Voyages Indigenous Tourism Australia**, and more - email **HERE** for info.

New The Chat ep

OUTGOING Virtuoso General Manager **Fiona Dalton** has joined this week's new episode of *The Chat with Jenny*.

The candid conversation sees Dalton share stories on her life and career in the travel industry.

CLICK HERE to listen to the latest episode.

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NCL cleans up

NORWEGIAN Cruise Line (NCL) has wrapped up its local beach clean-up series with non-profit partner Take 3 for the Sea, which saw 71 guests from across the globe help collect rubbish from beaches in Melbourne and Eden.

The complimentary shore excursion returned to Eden for the second time, before debuting in Melbourne at Brighton Beach, giving participants the chance to learn about the impact of plastic pollution on Australia's oceans and wildlife, under the guidance of a Take 3 for the Sea expert.

Norwegian Spirit guests collectively disposed of more than 1,600 items of rubbish, bringing NCL and Take 3 for the Sea closer to their goal of removing 50 million pieces of plastic from the environment by 2025, having removed 42 million pieces so far.

NCL will bring its beach clean-up series to Fiji on 03 Apr.

Eclipse goes Black

BLACK Communications is now handling the PR representation for Scenic Luxury Cruises & Tours' ultra-luxury discovery yacht, *Scenic Eclipse II*.

The highly anticipated vessel will sail into Sydney Harbour on 20 Apr in preparation for her two-year season in Australia, Asia and the Pacific.

Sydney's Hanoi link

VIETJET will introduce a second service from Sydney in Jun with direct services between the NSW capital and Hanoi.

Beginning from 08 Jun, non-stop 10-hour services between Sydney and Hanoi will operate twice weekly, departing each Thu and Sun at 8:30am.

The new route builds both on the low-cost carrier's existing daily service to Ho Chi Minh City and complements the addition of direct flights between Melbourne and Hanoi (**TD 05 Mar**) which will bring five days earlier.

Via Travel ventures out

AUSTRALIA-BASED destination management company Via Travel has rebranded and expanded to introduce its tour offerings to the wider market.

Since launching in 2017, Via Travel has provided for around 10,000 travellers through partnerships with 100 suppliers.

Signalling a shift in its focus, the company will now place its boutique small group tours in the spotlight, using its extensive knowledge of Australia and a hands-on personal approach to offer itineraries along the east and west coasts.

Speaking on what inspired the move, Via Travel Founder Stuart Wesierski said "we were heavily involved in the successful launch of seven tours for Intrepid Travel's comfort range, and have worked closely with them for nearly seven years".

"But, we are now aiming to extend our expertise to represent and collaborate with other trusted brands in Australia."

New Kakadu BDM

ALAIN Codino has joined the team at Kakadu Tourism as its new Business Development Manager, based in Darwin.

In his new role, the French-born Codino will be tasked with promoting the Top End national park, including Mercure's famous crocodile shaped hotel, Yellow Water Cruises and more.

Codino (**pictured**) joins Kakadu Tourism after three years as Event Sales Executive with Mindil Beach Casino Resort.

For more of the latest trade appointments, see **page seven**.



Via Travel will offer two key tour types - Boutique Comfort Tours, aimed at mature travellers who are looking for unique Aussie experiences while staying in comfort at locally-owned accommodation, and Flashpacker Adventure Tours, ideal for youthful, active travellers.

"The trade industry can expect to see us become a more prominent voice in terms of our advertising and social media presence that not only share our tours, but honours Australia's heritage, and promotes travel that gives back," Wesierski added.

He also said Via Travel will attend trade shows and work with state tourism operators and partners on various initiatives, sustainability and ecology work - learn more **HERE**. *JM*

Amadeus now allied

TRAVEL technology juggernaut Amadeus has been welcomed into the World Travel Agents Associations Alliance (WTAAA) as its first Allied Member, pioneering a new membership category for the global advocacy body.

The new category paves the way for travel industry partners to more closely collaborate with the WTAAA and its advocacy agenda.

The addition of industry partners as Allied Members is part of the WTAAA's effort to expand collaboration beyond travel agent associations.

WTAAA Executive Director, Otto de Vries said incorporating allied partners in its advocacy conversations will be crucial to driving industry-wide changes.

"Their unique perspectives and areas of expertise can inform a more well-rounded approach for advocating policies that benefit the travelling consumer," he said.

Amadeus will leverage its new membership to provide industry insights in areas of expertise including distribution, technology adoption and future trends.

Boeing braces for a massive loss

BOEING is anticipating a significant hit to its first quarter financial results following the Alaska Airlines door plug blowout in Jan (**TD 19 Mar**).

The grim forecast came from the Boeing's CFO Brian West, who predicted the operating profit margin for the company's commercial airplane unit would plunge to around -20%.

MEANWHILE, Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) chief Michael Whitaker said Boeing seems to prioritise production over safety and quality, following his recent visit to the plane maker's facilities.

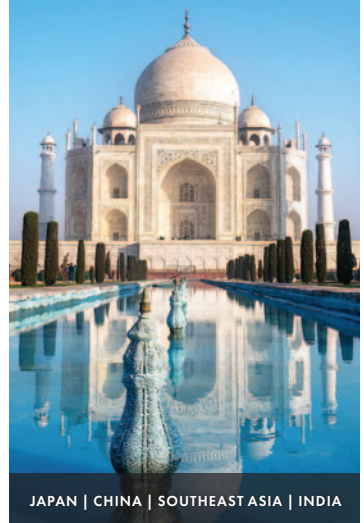
"There are issues around the safety culture in Boeing," Whitaker told *NBC Nightly News*.

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Pay day for Accor

ACCOR has announced a new partnership with pay.com.au, which will see its lifestyle loyalty program, Accor Live Limitless (ALL) become the site's first hotel and experiences transfer partner.

From 02 Apr, the collaboration will allow business owners to convert PayRewards Points to ALL Reward points, which can then be redeemed for stays at hotels, restaurants, bars, or for tickets to worldwide events.

New pay.com.au customers will receive a bonus 5,000 ALL Reward points when they sign up between 02-30 Apr, make \$10,000 in transactions in their first 30 days, and connect their ALL account.

Pay.com.au is an all-in-one business expenses payments platform - more information on the Accor offer is available [HERE](#).

The Outback's green future



ICONIC Australian railway and tour operator Journey Beyond announced yesterday several new initiatives for 2024, including its corporate social program Journey Lightly, a partnership with Paspaley Pearls and the release of Outback Spirit's 2025 program.

In addition, the company has just acquired Lotus Bird Lodge in Cape York and The Telegraph Station historical site in Alice Springs and signed on South Australian skincare brand Jurlique as its new amenities partner.

"As Australia's largest experiential tourism group, we want to be proactive stewards of the planet, ensuring we go beyond when it comes to responsible tourism ethics and practices," said Journey Beyond CEO Chris Tallent, who discussed the new program yesterday during the travel operator's annual event for partners and media in Adelaide.

Journey Lightly is centred around people, place and planet, and in terms of people, Tallent said the focus is on how the company connects and supports communities and cultures.

The program also includes a commitment to reducing the company's environmental footprint.

MEANWHILE, during yesterday's event, Outback Spirit's Executive General Manager, John Barnett, discussed

the 2025 program, which includes a new eight-day all-inclusive Arnhem Land & Kakadu Explorer Tour of Northern Australia.

"Arnhem Land is one of those places that very few people actually get to," Barnett said.

"It really is the heartland of indigenous culture. It's just an amazing place that I think every Australian should see."

As part of a new partnership with Paspaley, Journey Beyond has launched a touring experience in the Kimberley featuring a Paspaley Pearl Farm Tour, where guests will learn about the history of the pearling industry.

Then, travellers will visit the luxurious Paspaley Boutique in Broome and hear from artisan jewellers about the craftsmanship of each of the pieces.

Journey Beyond recently split from parent company Hornblower (**TD** 22 Feb) and as the company retained an independent operation and separate capital structure, Tallent reiterated "it's business as usual".

"We are now heading back to being a free standing company again," Tallent said.

"We will be really ramping up our growth with a renewed focus on growth and the expansion of the group."

"It's been a tough period of time coming out of COVID...we've rebounded beautifully and now we're ready to go." *JHM*

APT Canada 2025

APT has launched its 2025 Canada and Alaska 2025 pre-release collection of holidays for 2025, which includes 16 tours.

The collection encompasses east Canadian cities including Quebec City, Montreal and Toronto, as well as Alberta in western Canada, with stops at locations including Banff National Park, Lake Louise, and Jasper National Park.

The itineraries feature stays in luxurious Fairmont properties across Canada, a range of Signature Experiences including an exclusive visit to the Butchart Gardens on Vancouver Island, and much more.

Travellers can enjoy early bird savings of \$3,200 per couple on the popular 19-day Rockies Explorer & Alaska Cruise when they book by 29 Mar.



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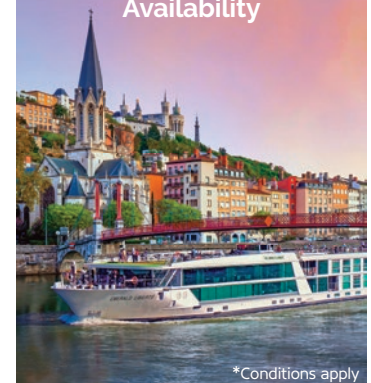
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Int'l travel picks up pace

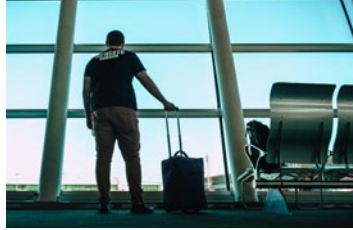
JAN saw 1.39 million Australians take short-term trips overseas, a sizeable jump of 650,000 trips in the previous month, according to the latest numbers from the ABS.

The figure also represented a growth of 294,990 when compared to Jan 2023, and was on-par with the pre-COVID Jan 2019 level.

New Zealand maintained its spot as the number one destination in Jan, receiving 177,090 trips (13% of the overall figure), ahead of Indonesia (156,130) and India (112,360), which bumped the USA from third position.

New South Wales residents were the most well-travelled during the first month of 2024, accounting for 497,840 trips, while Tasmanians ventured out the least, taking just 8,660 overseas journeys.

Overall, each state and territory saw an increase in the number



of residents taking international trips compared to the same month previous year, with South Australia recording the biggest jump at 33.3%. *JM*

Delano Dubai launch

ENNISMORE is preparing to debut its Delano brand in the UAE later this year, with the opening of Delano Dubai at the waterfront destination Bluewaters Dubai.

The property's launch is part of a deal signed between Ennismore and Dubai Holdings in 2023, and follows the opening of Banyan Tree Dubai at Bluewaters Dubai late last year (*TD* 14 Sep 2023).

Tate lambasts IOC

OUTSPOKEN Gold Coast Mayor Tom Tate has blasted the International Olympic Committee's (IOC) planning of the 2032 Olympic Games, suggesting his city was "conned" from hosting events.

The Gold Coast had pitched several existing venues to host sporting fixtures for the Games, selling the idea under the premise of saving the Qld Government around \$5 billion on new infrastructure.

However, Tate has been left fuming after the idea was rejected, made worse by a backflip by the Queensland Government not to build a dedicated stadium for the 2032 Olympics.

"We see the debacle...as the Gold Coast again ignored," Tate said, adding that the venue mishandling will spell the end of the Olympics and Paralympics movement after 2032 because "no country or region will ever trust the IOC again".

Amadeus' new Trip

TRIP.COM has expanded its partnership with Amadeus to include the travel and expense management firm's Mobility software, which will increase the options available to leisure and business travellers.

The new content will consist of car rental offers via Amadeus Cars Web Services, with real-time rates from over 50 providers in around 40,000 locations globally.

Ayers rocks the wine

GUESTS visiting Ayers Rock Resort in Uluru can now enjoy a refreshed wine list across each of its 14 dining and lounge options for 2024, with new Indigenous-led vineyards and a range of sustainable wines on offer.

Munda Wines and Mt Yengo now feature alongside several other Indigenous-owned companies on the beverage menus at the property, along with vegan and organic wine selections.


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Western Sydney Int'l will be a fresh start for air slots

OPINION

Peter Harbison is a globally recognised authority on the aviation industry, a consultant to the sector and the founder of CAPA - Centre for Aviation. Got an opinion to share? Get in touch at feedback@traveldaily.com.au.



SINCE work originally began on the Badgerys Creek Airport in 1990, successive governments managed to delay the decision to proceed for another 20 years - they were afraid of alienating marginal electorates in the area.

The resultant economic loss to Sydney can be counted in the billions of dollars. But now we're on the brink of a new era, when Western Sydney International Airport opens in late 2026.

So far, most of the talk about the new airport has been around freight and international airlines. The real excitement though is around the opportunity it creates for a new era of domestic airline competition.

Now we're on the verge of a brave new day. This time we

need to get it right. There are two issues in particular: slots and airport ownership.

When Western Sydney International begins operations in just under three years' time, the slot situation is a blank sheet.

It has become conventional wisdom that Australia's market is only big enough for two airlines.

If true, the only reason for that is that gaining access to Sydney Airport at peak times has been impossible; there have been no available slots for a new entrant.

That's why it's so enormously important that a whole new regime be worked out before the major incumbent airlines gobble up the slots and limit access for any potential new operators.

“ Qantas and Virgin Australia must be prevented from achieving the sort of duopolistic dominance they have at Sydney Airport ”

Leaving room to provide for that potential probably means leaving open a significant number of slots, even where the incumbents will be loudly claiming them.

This new situation creates a big opportunity for

any number of low-cost carriers to establish a sizeable base there.

It would have to be low cost, because today, in the airline industry, cost is king.

For the consumer, and for Sydney, this is a very exciting possibility. For Qantas and Virgin, it's an enormously challenging possibility. It's something that they've never had to confront before and has the power to transform the entire industry.

But it's not going to be easy regulating to ensure an "equitable" slot allocation.

It would be unreasonable to exclude Virgin and Qantas (and Rex) entirely, but at the same time, they must be prevented from achieving the sort of duopolistic dominance they have at Sydney Airport.

Once the horse trading begins (and there will be plenty of lobbying behind the scenes), the possibilities are manifest.

The process could, for example, include obligations to concede slots at Sydney Kingsford Smith, in return for getting access to the new airport. Over to you, ACCC!

The second issue is ownership. Fortunately for us all, the new airport is owned by the taxpayer, the federal government. It's an asset that is going to become extremely valuable over time.

So the second part of this new future scenario is to ensure that future governments don't fall into the trap of selling the airport to private interests before it has achieved a solid return.

When the government privatised SYD back in 2002, a Macquarie Bank consortium bought it for around \$5 billion.

During COVID, despite every airline being almost bankrupt, the airport was sold into private hands for nearly five times that price. Airports like Sydney's make very good investments.

The SYD owners missed out on using their right of first refusal to build the new airport when then-PM Malcolm Turnbull called their bluff. Having spent nearly \$25 billion buying Mascot, they'll be keen to protect that asset.

The new airport opens up many different competition scenarios.

It will quickly become clear that slots are not just an exotic, academic nicety that only need a bit of regulation. When they're in short supply, they control competition, and therefore airfares and airline entry. They're the tail that wag the dog.

You can expect to hear some very expensive consultants' reports to prove that the incumbents should have priority at the new airport.

At the same time, it's going to be challenging for the ACCC to navigate how the process can be managed - and to shine a light if Ministers are tempted to bestow favours on the incumbents.

Western Sydney International offers enormous opportunities.

The greatest shame is that successive federal governments managed to procrastinate for 30 years before providing the consumer and the Sydney economy with the opportunities the new airport will provide.

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UFI Melb 2025

MELBOURNE has been announced as the host city for the 2025 UFI Asia Pacific Conference, set to take place on 13-14 Feb at MCEC, immediately after AIME.

UFI is the global association of the exhibition industry, with a membership comprising more than 850 organisations in 87 countries.

This year's event, which took place in Macau, attracted close to 300 industry leaders from 22 nations.

MEANWHILE, the Australian Business Events Association (ABEA) is calling on emerging industry leaders to apply for UFI's Next Generation Leadership (NGL) Grant Programme.

Applications for the talent accelerator program are open until 07 Apr, [HERE](#).

GSTC MICE CRITERIA OUT NOW

THE Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC) has published the GSTC MICE Criteria to support venues, event organisers and events and exhibitions in implementing sustainable practices (**TD** 13 Apr 2023).

"After a year of dedicated work and effort, we announce the formal release of the GSTC MICE Criteria for Venues, Event Organizers, and Events & Exhibitions," GSTC CEO Randy Durband said.

"Let's seize this opportunity together to significantly advance the MICE industry's journey towards sustainability."

Developed in collaboration with the Singapore Tourism Board (STB) over an 18-month period, the guidelines focus on four key themes: effective sustainability planning, maximising social and economic benefits for the local community, enhancing cultural



heritage, and reducing negative impacts on the environment.

Designed to be relevant for the entire MICE industry, the criteria aims to help define sustainability in a holistic manner, and serve as basic guidelines for MICE businesses to become more sustainable, including advice on identifying more sustainable suppliers and service providers.

It can also be used as the

basis for certification for sustainability, help consumers identify sound sustainable MICE businesses, and serve as basic guidelines for education and training on sustainable MICE by universities, hospitality schools, or associations.

The GSTC MICE Criteria also includes three sets of suggested performance indicators - one each for venues, event organisers, and events & exhibitions.

STB Deputy Chief Executive, Yap Chin Siang, believes the new criteria will "empower industry players with the relevant tools to contribute to and thrive in a sustainable tourism landscape".

"I strongly urge all stakeholders in the MICE ecosystem to embrace the criteria and play a pivotal role in forging a greener future for global tourism," he added.

To see the new GSTC MICE Criteria, [CLICK HERE](#). *JM*

DC reels in events

DESTINATION Canada has launched a new, three-year International Convention Attraction Fund (ICAF), in a bid to boost Canada's global competitiveness in attracting major international conventions, conferences, and events.

Part of a CAD\$50 million (A\$56m) investment from the country's 2023 Federal Budget and a key part of its tourism growth plan, ICAF is expected to bring at least \$174 million into the Canadian economy.

Destination SA celebrates 20 years

BUSINESS Events Adelaide (BEA) is hosting 39 highly qualified business event decision makers this week for its annual business events showcase, Destination SA.

Now celebrating its 20th year, the fully hosted program will highlight the state's best offerings, with guests to enjoy activities like hotel site visits, tours of Adelaide's innovation districts, networking events,

and a trade show, including one-on-one meetings with Business Event Adelaide exhibitors.

Delegates will also have the opportunity to explore the state's regional areas, with a visit to either the McLaren Vale or Adelaide Hills.

BEA CEO Damien Kitto said Destination SA will demonstrate to buyers the advantages of choosing Adelaide for their future business events.

Party at The Lane

THE Hunter Valley's newest accommodation, The Lane Retreat, is offering free 90-minute welcome cocktail parties to event organisers who book a corporate retreat with a minimum spend of \$20,000 by 31 Mar.

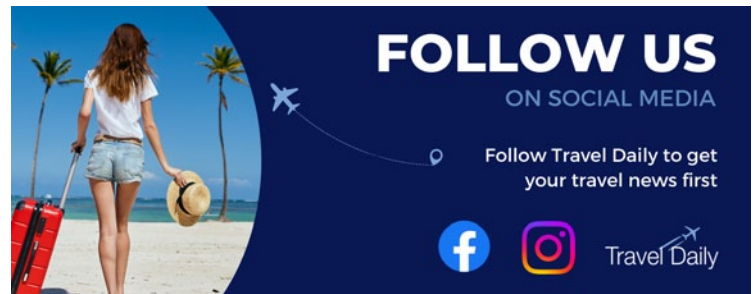
Set among the vineyards of Bimbadgen, the property features a range of indoor and outdoor venues, plus on and offsite activities.

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Jacqui Wright has joined **Qantas** as a Senior Partnership Manager. Wright brings over 20 years of experience in commercial negotiation, strategic sales and partnership marketing to the fold. Wright began her career at the national flag carrier as its Team Manager, Corporate Account Executive almost 25 years ago, and has since held various roles at renowned hospitality and tourism brands such as Hilton, Entertainment Group, and most recently, Big Red Group, where she was the Memberships Director.

The Board of **HMC Group** has welcomed industry stalwart **Lee Schofield** as its Independent Director and Chair. The former Alliance Airlines boss is now currently the Chief Operating Officer at LifeFlight Australia, based in Brisbane. In his new role, Schofield will utilise his expertise to help drive the strategy for Nexus Airlines, as well as all of the Group's relevant aviation and tourism projects.

Simon Gatt brings close to three decades of experience in the travel and tourism industry to his new role at **Inspiring Vacations**. As a Sales Team Leader, Gatt will take on the primary objective to increase sales revenue for the tour operator. The sales professional boasts an impressive resume, having held similar roles at Qantas, Travel Counsellors, Accor Plus, and most recently, CWT.

Tourism Whitsundays has announced a double appointment to further drive its tourism development and marketing efforts for the region. **Cait Fleming** has moved into the role of Industry Development and Trade Manager, while **Rosanagh Gallivan** has stepped up to become the PR & Social Media Executive. With over 15 years of industry experience, Fleming will formulate a sustainable growth model in the Whitsundays and Mackay Issac region, while Gallivan is tasked with elevating the organisation's marketing presence, particularly on social media.

SeaDream Yacht Club has named **Carlos Garzon** as its Vice President of Field Sales & National Accounts. In addition to his duties managing field sales and national accounts in the US market, Garzon will also oversee SeaDream's global team of Sales Directors. Garzon joins from Ensemble Travel Group, where he held the role of Vice President of Partner Relations for cruise.

In an effort to expand its growth in the South Asia region, **La Vie Hotels & Resorts** has appointed **Kristofer Quadros** as Cluster General Manager, Sri Lanka, where he will be overseeing operations across three properties in the country, including Radisson Hotel Colombo, Radisson Blu Resort Galle, and Radisson Hotel Kandy. Quadros will also be managing over 500 staff across the listed properties, in addition to driving significant growth, forging new relationships in key markets, and developing growing segments across the region.

AA upgrades wi-fi

AMERICAN Airlines has enhanced its in-flight wi-fi and entertainment, with customers now able to enjoy ad-sponsored wi-fi across all of America's Viasat domestic narrowbody fleet.

The carrier will begin installing high-speed wi-fi on nearly 500 of its dual-class regional aircraft beginning Jun, as well as add new in-flight content and specially curated channels to its entertainment offering.

Additionally, AAdvantage members will soon be able to use miles to pay for wi-fi on board on select aircraft.

Viking adds Danube

VIKING has added a new 10-day voyage on the Danube River to its 2024 river season in Europe, which kicks off today.

The 'Treasures of the Danube' itinerary will sail between Budapest and Passau from Dec 2024 until early Mar 2025, giving guests the opportunity to explore quaint towns in Germany, Austria and Hungary - more details **HERE**.

Big Red sponsor

ECOTOURISM Australia has announced Big Red Group as the major sponsor of its inaugural Global Sustainable Tourism Summit, which takes place 04-06 Jun in Brisbane.

Big Red's Chief Consumer and Sustainability Officer, Jemma Fastnedge, will present on the Sustainable Distribution Channels panel during the second day of the Summit, to share how the group supports a sustainable supply chain and promotes responsible experiences to travellers.



Window Seat

AN AMERICAN man was reportedly escorted off a Delta Air Lines Flight earlier this week after somehow managing to sneak on board the plane without a ticket.

The incident happened on a flight from Utah to Texas, leading to the arrest of 26-year-old Wicliff Fleurizard, who was found hiding in the plane's bathroom prior to departure.

Fleurizard, who is currently being held in Salt Lake City on a federal detainer, apparently told investigators that he had made a mistake and was "only trying to get home" after a snowboarding trip in Park City.

According to reports, Fleurizard told investigators he used a friend's Southwest Airlines "buddy pass" to get through security at the airport and decided to go to the Delta plane's gate after the flight he wanted to get on was full.

He was also captured on security cameras taking photos of other people's boarding passes at the gate, one of which he managed to use to board the plane.

"TSA is reviewing the circumstances of this matter but can confirm that the traveller in question was physically screened, along with their carry-on items, without incident at the Nashville Int'l Airport security checkpoint on 07 Feb before boarding the flight," a TSA spokesperson told *USA Today*.



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