

Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today features nine pages of news including two photo pages from **Luxury Travel Collection**, our **Corporate Update**, plus a full page from **Ecotourism**.

Choose Qld tourism

QUEENSLAND has kicked off the latest iteration of its 'Choose Tourism' campaign, encouraging high school graduates and mature workers to "join the crew" with a career in its tourism industry.

Jointly funded by the Federal Government, the campaign features five videos showcasing the life of tourism workers such as a Skyrail Cableway tour guide, qualia resort host and Cruise Whitsundays dockhand.

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Rex ready to head west

PERTH will join the Rex Airlines network from 28 Jun, with the carrier today confirming it will launch cross-country flights between Melbourne and Perth just in time for the start of school holidays (**TD** breaking news).

The airline's expanding Boeing 737 network will initially operate one flight per day, five days per week between the Victorian and WA capitals, with tickets on

sale now starting from \$299 for economy and \$999 in business.

Rex General Manager Network Strategy, Warrick Lodge, said the new service will add close to 90,000 seats between the two cities each year.

"When more airlines compete on a particular route, consumers benefit and our record in the domestic market speaks for itself, Lodge commented.

The new Melbourne-Perth route is Rex's 11th as the carrier builds its domestic challenge as an alternative to the Qantas and Virgin Australia duopoly.

Executives from both Melbourne and Perth airports welcomed the arrival of Rex, with MEL CEO Lorie Argus stating the new route was great news for passenger traffic and tourism in both states. *ML*

Hurry for NTIA noms

ONLY one week remains before nominations close for the 2024 National Travel Industry Awards (NTIAs) gala in Sydney.

Nominations are open to any travel industry professional who can put forward their peers and suppliers for recognition.

ATIA says the online process is straightforward and user-friendly, with a simple online form to be completed for each nomination.

"We're calling for everyone to get involved, get nominating, and get excited for NTIA 2024," said ATIA Chief Executive, Dean Long.

CLICK HERE to submit yours.

Ecotourism tickets

A **THREE-DAY** program packed with practical insights, networking and "big picture thinking" awaits for attendees of the 2024 Global Sustainable Tourism Summit - more information on **page 10**.

Bonza restructure?

THE fight to save Bonza from going under has continued this week, with administrators Hall Chadwick revealing American owners 777 Partners want to restructure the carrier.

Noted in documents lodged by the company on behalf of the airline's owners to the Federal Court, 777 Partners said it "may wish to propose a deed of company arrangement to restructure Bonza and Australian holding company 777 Holdco".

It is important to note that no formal proposal has been submitted by 777 Partners.

Any proposals from potential buyers will also be heard at the second creditors meeting for Bonza to be held in Aug, with the company laden with outstanding debts of \$115m (**TD 13 May**).

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Aussies flock to UK

DESPITE being one of Australia's most established outbound markets, a record number of Aussies are visiting Britain and spending more than ever before, new figures from VisitBritain (VB) suggest.

In 2023, Australian travellers spent an impressive £1.6 billion (A\$3.08 million) on trips to the UK, exceeding 2019 levels by 36% and 2022 by 43%.

Australians also broke new ground for the number of visits last year, with the UK welcoming 1.17 million Australian travellers, a rise of 10% compared to 2019.

"As Britain's fourth most valuable source market, VisitBritain continues to prioritise Australia and we look forward to rolling out our global film and TV campaign later this year," VB said.

Australia signs Canada pledge



DESTINATION Canada's Australia Office has signed a pledge with Australian travel partners to collaborate on efforts, knowledge, and resources to promote responsible growth in the Canadian tourism sector.

The pledge aligns with Destination Canada's 'Tourism 2030: A World of Opportunity' strategy, and aims to enhance Canadian product offerings to positively impact Canada's environment, culture, society, and economy.

The commitment also focuses on community-led destination development and strengthening reconciliation with Indigenous people and the land.

"We have been working extensively with our founding strategic advisory group, consisting of key industry partners over the last nine months to realise our vision, align, and develop this pledge," said Destination Canada Australia, Managing Director, Julie King.

"This is part of our collective commitment to make significant impact in the work we are doing to do to create responsible growth in the Canadian tourism sector," she added.

King is encouraging all industry interested in aligning with the Destination Canada Australia vision to sign the pledge.

The advisory group is made up

of 10 industry representatives, including King; Air Canada's GM Australia, Vic Naughton and its Director - Travel Trade, Nathan McLoughlin; Adventure World MD Neil Rodgers; Sno'n'Ski Holidays MD Daniel Walker; Tim Holden, Flight Centre Travel Group's GM Tourism Bodies and Global Partnerships; and Helloworld's Group GM - Marketing, Melissa Warren. **JM Pictured:** McLoughlin; Holden; Warren; Casandra Foister, VP Ski Max Holidays; King; Rodgers; Naughton; Walker; Destination Canada's Naomi Fisher, and Greg McCallum, Entire Travel Group's Sales & Marketing Director.

A&K's new Americas

ABERCROMBIE & Kent (A&K) has unveiled its new Americas collection, which features 10 brand-new journeys to South America and Canada, along with 17 refreshed itineraries.

Guests can discover Chile, Bolivia and Peru over 20 days on the new 'Andean Adventure', which takes in the islands of Bolivia's famed Lake Titicaca, the Atacama Desert in Chile, Peru's Inca heritage, and much more.

A&K has also introduced an 11-day 'Classic Colombia' tour, a nine-day 'Canadian Rockies Adventure', and plenty more.

See the new brochure **HERE**.

Race for Vanuatu

THE collapse of Air Vanuatu (**TD 10 May**) has seen Australian carriers Qantas and Virgin Australia this week vie to fill the capacity gap on the important outbound leisure route.

Qantas confirmed its has applied to the International Air Services Commission for capacity on the Vanuatu route from later this year, which, if approved, will see both Qantas and Jetstar launch flights between Australia and Port Vila.

Virgin Australia, which already services Vanuatu, has also indicated plans to increase current frequencies between Brisbane and Port Vila.

Air Vanuatu was approached for comment regarding its current status, which in its last update stated it was seeking a buyer.

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with Jenny

Travel Daily
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Charlotte Pass on the nose

CHARLOTTE Pass Ski Resort has suffered a terrible blow on the eve of the Australian ski season, with a fire on the premises causing an indefinite delayed start to 2024 operations.

The blaze in the sewage treatment plant means wastewater from taps, showers and toilets cannot be processed at the site, with alternative options currently being sought so the resort can open to visitors.

In a statement on the Charlotte Pass website, Chair of the resort's parent company, Kevin Blyton, said repair options on the table include restoring service in sections of the plant that have not been damaged, or trucking effluent offsite.

"I must caution that all of these potential options present significant challenges and may not be operationally feasible in the unique alpine region Charlotte Pass is located in, as



well as the short timeframe before the commencement of the 2024 snow season," Blyton said.

"Work is also underway on the development of a permanent sewerage solution for the 2025 snow season onwards."

Blyton Group has been contacted for comment regarding how impacted bookings will be managed and whether refunds and credits will be issued.

The latest chapter continues a run of bad luck and poor management at the resort, which was fined \$200,000 in 2022 for leaking sewage into Spencers Creek in 2019 (*TD* 24 Nov 2022).

Charlotte Pass was also rebuilt after it was destroyed in 2020 by the Black Summer bushfires. *AB*

Tour Qatar in the air

DISCOVER Qatar has announced the launch of exclusive tours called 'Discover Doha by Air', offering travellers the chance to visit the Middle Eastern country's most popular attractions in a light aircraft.

Each air tour can accommodate eight passengers in an air-conditioned cabin of a Cessna 208 Caravan, with the large windows on board allowing for maximum viewing opportunities.

Tickets for the 45-minute Discover Doha by Air flights also include in-flight commentary from the pilot, as it flies over Al Thumama Stadium, Pearl Island, Katara Cultural Village, and more.

The first tour will take off from Doha on 27 Jun, and is priced from approximately A\$300pp.

Children aged under two years can board for free.

The experience is also available for pax transiting for six or more hours at Hamad Int'l, including transfers for around A\$340.

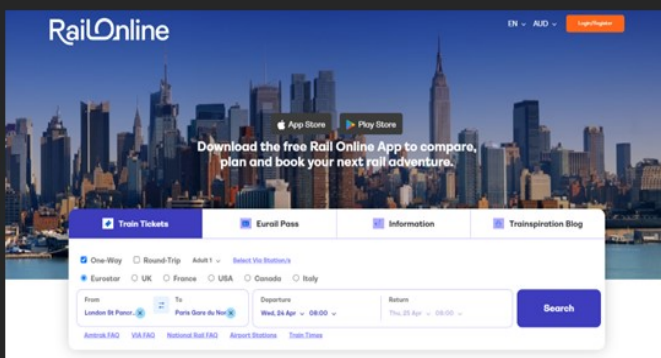
One slice of Italy left

TRUTRAVELS' first small-group, eight-day 'Slice of Italy' tour departing in Sep has sold out in only a matter of days.

Targeting travellers aged between 18 and 40, the Italian adventure visits the ruins of Rome, the sunsets of Sorrento, the Colosseum, Pompeii, and boasts a special street food tour of Naples, to name just a few.

"All TruTravels trips are packed with inclusions, meaning your clients can easily budget and know they'll get to do all the fun stuff whilst they're away without having to dip into their savings too often," the operator said.

The next Oct departure is currently on sale for \$2,636, and will be the last trip in 2024.



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12 Aussies injured

TURBULENCE that struck a Singapore Airlines flight this week (**TD 22 May**) has seen 12 Australian passengers aboard hospitalised in Bangkok.

The caused of the incident is still being investigated by the carrier.

Uber airport shuttle

RIDESHARE giant Uber will expand its airport shuttle service to the United States during the northern summer months.

The company has not disclosed which airports will offer the service, stating it is working with airport partners & local officials.

Customers will see a 'Shuttle' option in the Uber app when they are in a city offering the service, allowing them to book up to five seats from seven days in advance to five minutes before departure on a range of scheduled rides.

Payments will be made through the app, with prices confirmed and not subject to surge pricing.

Cruise capacity surging

GLOBAL cruise capacity is expected to increase by at least 10% over the next four years, according to Cruise Lines International Association's (CLIA) latest *State of the Cruise Industry* report released this week.

The total number of cruise ship berths is anticipated to reach 745,000 internationally by the end of 2028, fuelled by a strong post-pandemic rebound which is occurring at a faster rate than any other travel and tourism vertical.

Cruise travel reached 107% of 2019 volumes last year, seeing 31.7 million passengers set sail on voyages around the world.

In comparison, the total number of international tourism arrivals in 2023 was still 12% lower than they were in 2019.

By 2027, the number of cruise passengers will grow to nearly 40 million, and that figure will be helped along by an increasing number of younger travellers

taking to cruising in recent years.

A third of all cruise passengers are currently aged under 40, with CLIA data suggestion Millennials are the most enthusiastic about planning future cruise trips.

Close to 30% of cruise passengers over the last two years have been new to cruising - a rise of 12% on previous years.

The report also showed that demand for cruises in the Australasia region will grow from 1.48 million by the end of this year to 1.73 million by 2028, adding to the good news that passenger volumes eclipsed 2019 levels last year (**TD 07 Sep 2023**).

Despite its relatively small population, Australia has maintained fifth position on the list of the world's largest source markets, behind the US, Germany, the UK, and China.

Expedition operators will also be buoyed by an increase of 71% between 2019 and 2023. **AB**

Air revenues stable

DOMESTIC airfares have levelled out across all fare types and seating classes, according to the ACCC's latest *Airline Competition in Australia* report.

The stabilisation follows three months of volatility in airfare prices, decreasing 13.2% from Dec 2023 to Jan 2024 before promptly rebounding with a 9.2% increase in Feb, a figure largely driven by a surge in demand.

Average air revenues for Mar are still 19.9% higher than pre-pandemic levels in nominal terms.

Seeing travel clearly

SENSORY Tourism Australia has launched new travel experiences to cater for vision-impaired international visitors.

Working with Destination NSW to develop the tours, adventures will be led by tour guides who have each had hundreds of hours presenting destinations to blind and low-vision travellers.



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TripAdvisor for pets

GLOBAL confectionary and pet food maker, Mars Incorporated, has inked a partnership with TripAdvisor to “make the world a more dog-friendly place”.

Launching initially in the US but with plans to expand globally, the duo have introduced a new co-branded Pet Travel Hub designed to address “pain points” that pet owners experience when travelling with their companions.

Pet owners will be able to more easily find businesses able to accommodate both themselves and their pets, with data showing one-third of travellers will change their plans to suit their pets.

The hub will feature city guides with pet-friendly travel tips and an AI trip builder with itineraries that can be personalised with reviews from other travellers.

Mars Incorporated wholly owns and produces pet food brands such as Pedigree and Whiskas along with popular chocolate products Mars, Snickers, M&Ms and Extra chewing gum.

Coral docks three

CORAL Expeditions has confirmed a trio of new recruits this week, with Andrew Thwaites starting in the new role of Global Director of Sales, alongside two new faces in the marketing and reservations teams.

The Aussie cruise has welcomed Chris Jahnsen as Marketing Manager, while Katherine Plohl is the new Reservations and Revenue Manager.

California skiers ride into town



TANNED beach bodies might be what comes to mind when thinking about California, but go inland and America’s ‘Golden State’ also delivers a world-class skiing and winter destination.

Representatives from two of the state’s winter wonderlands, Lake Tahoe and Mammoth Mountain, jetted into town this week to co-promote year-round wares to Australian travel agents, and even with America about to break into summer, it is probably too soon to put away the skis.

In fact, Mammoth Lakes Director of Sales, Michael Vanderhurst, said visitors can ski through summer if they like, with conditions still ideally higher up the mountain even as late as Aug.

“Our elevation is much higher than Tahoe, and what that translates to is more snow [and] longer ski seasons - we’re still open for skiing now - normally we ski until the end of May.”

Closer to sea level, Mammoth

Lakes offers seven of them inside the town boundaries, but expand that radius to 20km and you’ll find more than 100, some quite secluded and rarely visited.

Further north in Lake Tahoe, Director of Sales Bart Peterson told **TD** outdoor enthusiasts are spoilt for choice of things to do, with Aussies already spending on average five days to make use of a plethora of hike and bike trails, plus “crystal clear water” for swimming or paddle boarding.

Holders of the Ikon Pass will enjoy great access to lift passes and other facilities at both.

Lake Tahoe is easily accessed by air, with several airlines flying from both Los Angeles and San Francisco to Reno, 45 mins away.

Mammoth Mountain is a little more challenging by air, however United offers a seasonal service from SFO in summer and winter.

Bart Peterson, Lake Tahoe and Michael Vanderhurst, Mammoth Lakes are **pictured** above. *ML*



Window Seat

A NEW airline has launched in the US offering top-tier service for only the most discerning travellers - not for you though, for your cute doggie.

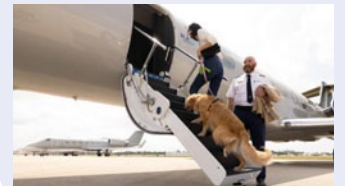
Canines travelling on board Bark Air will enjoy “white paw service” in a “dog-centric” cabin configuration, complete with treats, noise-cancelling ear muffs, a beverage of their choice, and other surprises.

Founded by pet company Bark, the airline will operate as a public charter service, flying Gulfstream G5 jets between the New York City metro area and LA, as well as from New York to London.

Each dog ticket comes with a pass for one human - and it’ll set you back at least US\$6,000.

“We are excited...to create an experience that is truly dog-first - which is drastically different from just accepting dogs - from the ground to the skies,” said Bark co-founder and CEO, Matt Meeker.

In case you’re wondering if this is an elaborate joke or PR stunt, the company has already confirmed it is “a totally real airline”.



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Memorable moments unlock luxury partnerships

FROM exotic tropical temptations to flirting with the south of France, the gratitude of the Luxury Travel Collection (LTC) goes to our key Platinum Partners, Oceania Cruises and Regent Seven Seas Cruises, for hosting the most spectacular and memorable evenings at the 2024 LTC Global Business Owner's Soiree on Hayman Island.

For over 100 luxury leaders, these gorgeous evening events unlocked luxury in the best possible way, with the warm embrace of collaboration and camaraderie.

The luxury client has never been in such safe hands with the partnerships formed during this extraordinary week.





Luxury Travel
Collection

Partnerships the golden key to success

ELEVEN exceptional partners unlocked luxury with immersive brand experiences for guests as part of the Luxury Travel Collection (LTC) Soiree program.

From a sushi class with Collette to French crepes with Ponant, European wine tasting with Regent, coffee appreciation with Oceania, weaving classes with Adventure World, cocktail mastery with Avalon and GFOB, yoga with Viking, tea and scones with Scott Dunn - plus much more from Scenic, IHG, Back Roads and Discova, guests walked away with a head full of knowledge and a heart full of appreciation.

COMO, G Adventures Geluxe, Silversea and Tauck also shared brand insights during an illuminating lunchtime panel session.

On behalf of all LTC member brands - a huge thank you to the incredible partners that supported this major event.



CORPORATE UPDATE

ATMC pumps up event value

THE Association of Travel Management Companies (ATMC) has partnered with the Global Business Travel Association (GBTA) to enhance the value of its new annual conference and exhibition, the Australia Corporate Travel Summit (ACTS).

Taking place on 13 Nov in Sydney, the inaugural event will feature keynote addresses from industry leaders, panels and workshops on best-practice corporate travel management.

The collaboration with GBTA will offer value and benefits to travel managers in the form of a bundled delegate pass to ACTS and GBTA membership, plus discounts for GBTA's industry members.

AI must be ethical

WHILE AI promises significant advancements in business travel, there needs to be a focus on bridging the gap between human values and AI ethics.

This was the stance taken by former Facebook CEO for Australia & NZ, Stephen Scheeler, during his presentation at Corporate Traveller's Unpacked event roadshow late last week.

"AI offers vast opportunities for businesses to grow, but building trust in its application is crucial, he explained.

"Continuous innovation and responsible development are essential to ensure AI systems are up to the challenge of real-world applications," he added.

"We are delighted to announce this exciting agreement with GBTA, which adds strength and depth to our agenda and enhances the value of the event to our attendees," said ATMC Chairperson, Tass Messinis.

"In a short space of time, we have developed a highly collaborative relationship between all stakeholders in this event and we look forward to a great success for our industry in Nov."

GBTA Regional SVP for EMEA and APAC, Catherine Logan, said "entering this partnership with ACTS underscores GBTA's commitment to the APAC region and allows us to be part of a high-quality event that focuses on the unique trends and issues affecting the business travel industry Down Under". *JM*

FIFO hubs needed

AUSTRALIAN regional carrier Nexus Airlines has called for the establishment of FIFO hubs in Broome and Geraldton to boost connectivity to some of WA's most isolated regions.

Speaking at the Corporate Traveller Unpacked Perth conference last week, Nexus MD Michael McConachy said the proposed hubs will significantly reduce transit times and costs.

McConachy explained the strategic hubs have the potential to enhance regional development and improve transit solutions for FIFO workers.

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Air Canada glides into Vivid



VISITORS at Vivid Sydney will be able to roll through the CBD in Air Canada's latest fleet addition - a light rail tram wrapped in the airline's livery.

The Air Canada-themed tram is part of a new marketing campaign to put the carrier under the spotlight during the month-long Vivid Sydney festival, which kicks off tomorrow.

The locomotive will travel the Randwick to Circular Quay line, which forms part of a network that includes more than 40 stops and almost 25km of track.

The campaign also includes digital display ads at Metro stations along Sydney's North West Line between Tallawong and Chatswood to showcase the Canadian flag carrier's non-stop daily Sydney-Vancouver service.

Air Canada Marketing & Online Sales Manager, Eunica Pineda,

said the tram wrap is more than just a promotion.

"Thousands of commuters, representing all of our key target customers segments, travel on the light rail network each day," Pineda shared.

"In addition, research shows that almost half of Sydney light rail passengers recall advertising they see in transit waiting areas."

"Factor in the additional exposure from Vivid Sydney and it's a highly effective way to place Canada and the US front of mind with Australia travellers."

More than 3.5 million people are expected to flock to Vivid Sydney this year. *JM*

The Air Canada team **pictured** ready to board the tram: Rick Pomery, David McNabb (kneeling), Natalie Brean, Imeleta Aluni, Eunica Pineda, Fei Revel and Sarah Constable.



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The Brooklet's 'Bring Friends for Free' offer is now available until 31 Jul for stays at the Byron Bay property until 30 Nov. Priced at \$1,600, instead of the normal listing of \$2,250, guests can receive a complimentary upgrade for two nights to a two-bedroom villa, plus two bottles of premium wine, a breakfast basket, unlimited access to the pool, and more. Call 0488 654 444 to book.

Available until 29 May, **Airnorth** is now offering discounted one-way airfares to Australia's regional hotspots, including Darwin, Broome, Cairns and Alice Springs, from as low as \$218. Valid for travel periods between 01 Sep and 30 Nov 2024, travellers can take advantage of the Unravel Travel Sale [HERE](#).

Singapore Airlines' loyalty members can save up to 30% off on travel experiences on the carrier's platform, **Pelago**, when they redeem their KrisFlyer miles before 31 May. The travel aggregator is providing over 200,000 travel experiences across 3,000 destinations, including Vivid Sydney and Harry Potter: Forbidden Forest Experience.

Intrepid Travel is inviting customers to save up to 20% off selected original small-group adventures and up to 25% off its epic Antarctica Expeditions through its annual World Sale. For example, guests can save on the 11-day 'Best of Antarctica: Pristine Wilderness' tour, priced from \$10,032. Call Intrepid on 1300 304 974 to book before 27 May.

Enjoy up to 30% off on over 100 departures with **Contiki's** latest 'Hot Dates' promotion, where travellers can save up to a whopping \$3,448 on their next big getaway. The promotion includes departures all across Europe, including Greece, Czech Republic, England, France, and more. [CLICK HERE](#) to check out the deals.

Celebrating the launch of its Reflections on Wellness program, **Chiva-Som Hua Hin** in Thailand is offering guests who stay between Jun and Sep a 'pay 4, stay 5' offer as well as complimentary limousine transfers. Additionally, guest who book 10 nights or more before 31 May will enjoy a complimentary vital genomics test valued at \$1,500. To learn more or to make a booking, contact 1300 857 037.

Up to \$4,000pp of savings are available on **Uniworld Boutique River Cruises'** all-inclusive, luxury river cruises in France throughout 2024. Enjoy the 15-day 'Grand France' itinerary from \$10,499 per person aboard the S.S. *Catherine* and S.S. *Joie de Vivre* vessels. Plenty more sailings are available - call 1300 780 231 for more details.

APT is offering savings of up to \$2,800 per couple when travellers book its 12-day 'Enchanting Japan' tour before 31 May. From \$12,495 per person, twin share, travellers can traverse the oriental land to experience the wonders of Tokyo, the beauty of Hakone, and the unique cultures of Takayama and Kanazawa - book now on 1300 278 278.

Travel teams up for a cause



ITALKTRAVEL & cruise The Junction recently banded together with Scenic Luxury Cruises & Tours to help raise over \$67,000 for the Westpac Rescue Helicopter Service.

The travel companies, whose team members are **pictured**, were among the sponsors of the 30th Anniversary Hunter Rescue Ball in Newcastle, which overall generated more than \$250,000 for the life-saving service.

More than 1,450 people attended the annual event last Fri, which was hosted by Australian TV personality and singer, David Campbell, and featured auctions and raffles throughout the night.

Italktravel & cruise The Junction partnered with Scenic to offer a *Scenic Eclipse* cruise as a major prize, with ticket sales raising over \$42,000, while raising another \$25,000 through other prize donations.

"We believe [the rescue service] to be one of the most important in our region," said Julia van

Huisstede, co-owner of italktravel & cruise The Junction.

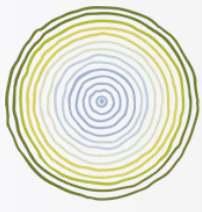
"The relationship is strong between Westpac Rescue Helicopter, scenic and italktravel & cruise The Junction, and we hope to continue this support in years to come." *JM*

ETC adds Rail Europe

RAIL Europe has joined the European Travel Commission (ETC) in a move that the rail wholesaler believes will improve the promotion of rail transport services and shed more light on sustainable travel approaches.

The partnership will see Rail Europe leverage its extensive international B2B network, including tour operators, (online) travel agencies, and travel management companies, to revitalise rail travel across prominent destinations.

The pact will also see new collaborative projects in the future inked to achieve more sustainable travel initiatives.



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