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Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today features seven pages of the latest travel industry news including our **Luxury** page, plus a full page from **Abercrombie and Kent**.

QF's big Kiwi sale

QANTAS has launched sale fares to New Zealand, including Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch and Queenstown, with return economy fares starting from \$549.

Seats are available from most Australian capital cities for a range of travel periods between Jun 2024 and Apr 2025.

Loyalty members can use 27,500 Qantas points (plus taxes, fees and carrier charges) when booking Classic Plus reward seats - the sale ends midnight AEST 04 Jun.

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ATG CONNECT

Reject "crazy" US rules: ATIA

EXCLUSIVE

AUSTRALIAN Travel Industry Association (ATIA) CEO Dean Long has called on the Federal Government to learn the lessons of the pandemic and reject any of the "crazy provisions" included in the United States' new mandated rules around aviation refunds.

Speaking about reforms being considered by the upcoming Aviation White Paper seeking to address airline delays and cancellations, Long cautioned that any changes to aviation refund policies must not lead to similar scenarios experienced during the "COVID travel credit debacle", and in doing so, avoid any mass closure of businesses.

Of particular concern to the ATIA chief is the requirement by the US Government for travel agents to provide full refunds to clients, regardless of whether an airline has refunded the money.

"It appears the lessons of COVID have not been learnt and currently all agents that sell air to or within the USA are liable to provide refunds if requested by the consumer following a

cancelled flight," Long said.

"ATIA has been working with Federal Government, Opposition, crossbenchers, and key public servants to ensure they have the best advice moving forward to make good decisions," he added.

Long also criticised US refund reforms that require agents to pay back taxes associated with cancelled airline bookings that will not be put back in the pockets of agents by government.

ATIA's call coincides with both Qantas and Virgin Australia recently watering down their positions on Australia creating an industry-wide aviation ombudsman, which would be charged with dealing more effectively with passenger complaints and refunds.

Read Long's full column on the topic on **page five**. AB

A&K 2025 journeys

ABERCROMBIE & Kent (A&K) is showcasing its 2025 luxury small group journeys, including the 14-day 'Taj Mahal & the Treasures of India' - read more on **page 7**.

Become a tax-pert

THE Australian Travel Industry Association (ATIA) has partnered with the Australian Tax Office (ATO) to offer two exclusive masterclasses for members ahead of the end of financial year.

On Tue 04 Jun from 10-11am AEDT, members can join the 'Claiming Small Business Tax Deductions' webinar to help solidify their understanding of deductible expenses.

Participants can also engage directly with an experienced tax officer - **CLICK HERE** to register.

The second masterclass, 'Cash Flow for Small Business Success', will take place on Tue 09 Jul from 10 to 11am AEDT, and will better equip members with strategies on how to analyse, improve, and monitor cashflow position - register to attend **HERE**.

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Kelsian eyes growth

THE parent company for SeaLink Marine & Tourism has increased its corporate debt facility to assist in funding its short- and medium-term expansion strategy.

Kelsian's new funding reserve includes a combination of three-, four- and five-year revolving cash advance facilities of about \$1.13 billion, as well as \$260 million in banking credits.

The new larger debt facility has been provided on an unsecured basis compared with existing secured facilities.

"This new funding...will enable Kelsian to capitalise on market opportunities that align with our growth strategy," Group CFO, Andrew Muir, confirmed.

Kelsian brands also include Red Cat Adventures, K'Gari Beach Resort, and Captain Cook Cruises.

Heading on a new Envoyage



FLIGHT Centre Travel Group (FCTG) officially launched its Envoyage brand in Australia last night, the company's growing home for independent travel agencies (**TD** 27 Feb).

Envoyage's 'premiere' took place at Ivy Sydney, with suppliers joining FCTG for a night of celebration and thanks to those who have worked alongside the company as the new brand gets off the ground.

FCTG Independent General Manager, Nick Queale, who will now serve as Envoyage GM, inspired attendees to create together alongside the new brand, which he confirmed will pursue a storefront presence around Australia.

"We're proud of what we're doing, and for us the journey needs to be bigger, and that bigger and better for us is going to be shopfronts," he said.

"Bringing it into the consumer space, elevating the brand, supporting it, having shopfronts across Australia and really being proud of what we're delivering.

"Let's innovate together, let's try and push the market, let's see what we can get out there for all our stakeholders.

The evening also acknowledged the efforts of Travel Partners founder Jeff Hakim, with members of the FCTG-owned brand now able to join the Envoyage independent arm. **MS**

Pictured is the FCTG team behind the Envoyage brand.

A decade of itravel

ITRAVEL Griffith marked its 10th year with the itravel network last week by hosting a celebratory event at the picturesque Calabria Family Wines winery.

Store owners, Chontell Giannini and Janine Keenan, welcomed the itravel head office, VIP clients, key suppliers and other esteemed guests to an evening of appreciation and excitement for the future.

"As we reflect on the past 10 years, we are inspired by the memories created, the milestones achieved, and the opportunities that lie ahead," Giannini said.

Steve Labroski, Chief Executive of itravel, congratulated the itravel Griffith team (who are **pictured**) and said, "we commend Chontell, Janine, and their dedicated team for their unwavering commitment to excellence".

Guests enjoyed an evening of gourmet delights, fine wines, giveaway prizes, and live entertainment, culminating in a toast to itravel Griffith's continued success.



GFOB details perks

TRAVEL agencies can earn a \$2,000 Christmas party funded by Globus family of brands as one of the many perks available under the company's new agent trade rewards program (**TD** 21 May).

The festive funding is available to agencies that achieve Platinum status, providing annual sales of \$750,000+ in a calendar year across the Globus, Cosmos and Avalon Waterways brands.

Other perks to Platinum agencies include access to an FOC Panorama stateroom on an Avalon Waterways river cruise for one "active selling advisor" and a travel companion.

Top-selling agencies will also be in pole position for consideration on hosted famils and have access to a dedicated customer service team of experienced consultants.

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Intrepid EDM tweak

INTREPID Travel is enjoying a significant increase in bookings and revenue, partly as a result of better leveraging first-party data, real-time customer behavioural insights and AI.

Speaking with *ITNews* this week, Chief Customer Officer, Leigh Barnes, noted the operator had seen an uptick in bookings following more personalised EDM campaigns that make better use of client actions and preferences.

Barnes said Intrepid was making more informed predictions about customer travel preferences based on real-time interactions with its customer-facing platforms, combined with previous booking data.

Revenue from bookings grew from \$370 million to \$621 million between 2023 and 2024.

Aussies say 'aloha' to Hawaii



HAWAI'I Tourism Oceania (HTO) recently brought the spirit of aloha to Australia and New Zealand with its Month of Lei roadshow from 16-22 May.

Key representatives from the Hawaiian Islands made their way around the country for a series of events and destination training sessions, providing local travel agents with deep insights into the destination's unique offerings.

Featuring representatives from the visitor bureaus of Kaua'i, O'ahu, Maui, and Hawai'i Island, the roadshow kicked off on the Gold Coast, before heading to Newcastle and culminating in Adelaide with a travel trade lunch and a dedicated evening session at Phil Hoffmann Travel Glenelg.

Explora raises sails

EXPLORA Journeys has been named as the global partner of the Louis Vuitton 37th America's Cup, a prestigious yacht race taking place between 22 Aug and 27 Oct in Barcelona, Spain.

As part of the collaboration, MSC Group's luxury ocean travel brand will host America's Cup trophy celebrations on board *EXPLORA 1* on 19 Jun, along with exclusive activations, events and luxurious VIP hospitality.

The Explora Journeys logo will also be displayed during the broadcast of the races.

Hawaiian Airlines also provided an update on their services, and attendees enjoyed the chance to win exciting prizes at each event.

Month of Lei is HTO's signature campaign, designed to highlight the rich cultural heritage and unique characters of each of the Hawaiian Islands. *JM*

Pictured: Maile Brown, Kaua'i Visitors Bureau; June Pagdilao, Maui Visitors & Convention Bureau; Anna Riedel, Hawai'i Tourism Oceania; Karishma Chowfin, O'ahu Visitors Bureau; and Deanna Isbister, Island of Hawai'i Visitors Bureau.

Ormina family guide

ORMINA Tours has launched a new Family Travel Guide for agents, providing them with the necessary tools to create bespoke itineraries for their clients.

The 16-page digital booklet offers insights on European destinations like Italy, Spain, Portugal, the Swiss/Italian Alps, including recommendations on family-friendly activities, accommodation, transport, and the best times to visit.

There is also a dedicated Christmas section, which provides tips on how to experience the magic of the holiday season in Europe, from charming festive markets to ice skating and visits with Santa Claus - read it [HERE](#).



Window Seat

ANOTHER travel industry trivia genius took to the TV airwaves yesterday, with Flight Centre Travel Group veteran Alan Reis spotted in the hot seat on Channel 7's *The Chase*.

Reis, who was business owner of Canberra travel agency Reis & James Travel Associates for almost two decades before stepping down earlier this year, went head-to-head with Chaser Issa "The Super Nerd" Schultz in an exciting Mon afternoon general knowledge challenge.

Given Alan's background prior to working in travel as a professional soccer player, it was perhaps helpful that there were a number of sports questions, but nevertheless he put up a valiant effort and managed to collect a "cash builder" worth \$12,000.

Unfortunately, in the exciting 'Final Chase' stage of the well-subscribed quiz show his team was vanquished by Schultz, so Reis sadly came home with empty pockets.

He's sure to still have plenty of anecdotes about his five minutes of fame alongside quizmaster Larry Emdur however, when he chairs the next Travel Associates Advisory Board meeting.

Reis' appearance on *The Chase Australia* (pictured) follows that of *Travel Daily's* very own Sean Harrigan (*TD 29 Mar 2022*) where he and his team triumphed over Chaser Cheryl "Tiger Mum" Toh.



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A conversation with Michelle Ashcroft

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Local Cruise Icons

VIRTUOSO is preparing to formally expand its prestigious Cruise Icons recognition program to Australia and New Zealand next month.

Flagged by the luxury network earlier in the year, the Cruise Icons debut in ANZ will see 29 advisors access multiple benefits in recognition for being in the top 1% of cruise sellers globally.

Cruise Icon perks include a range of networking opportunities, and client benefits on 400 select cruises annually across 13 cruise lines such as a dedicated onboard host.

The local travel sellers will join an elite international group of cruise experts, with only 146 currently in Virtuoso's Cruise Icons club across eight countries.

Virtuoso GM ANZ, Greg Treasure, said the local Icons have showcased "resilience, creativity, and an unwavering dedication to surpassing client expectations", while selling cruise journeys.

Newton to speak at Travel24

ACCENTURE Head of Cultural Forecasting, Michelle Newton (pictured), is confirmed to speak at Travel24, revealing the socio-cultural drivers of change that are impacting the tourism sector.

Newton will provide practical and tangible examples as to how these trends are presenting globally, as well as insight into how the sector can move to a more resilient future.

Also confirmed is Yohan Siva, a multi-store owner within the Helloworld Travel network, who will join the travel advisor panel moderated by Australian



Travel Industry Association Chief Executive Officer, Dean Long.

In further exciting news, CVFR Travel Group has come on board as the Platinum sponsor for Travel24, with Group CEO Ram Chhabra already confirmed to speak about the next 24 months in airline services.

Earlybird tickets are on sale now for a limited time **HERE**. DF

G'day Group buy

G'DAY Group has purchased the Taunton Farm Holiday Park in WA's Margaret River region for an undisclosed sum.

The new asset features 18 cabins, animal feeding experiences and a playground.

New chapter for QF

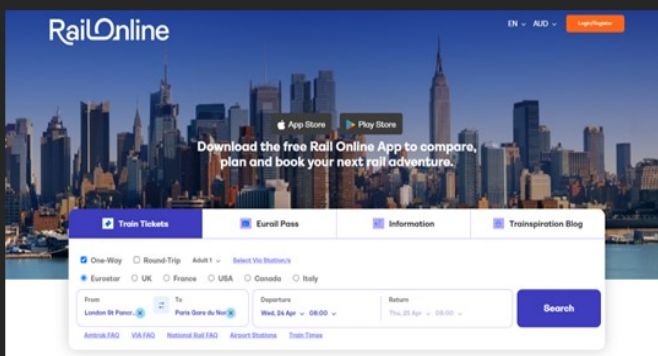
GENEVRA Leek has been announced as the new Editor-in-Chief of *Qantas Magazine* and its digital arm, Travel Insider.

Leek, who is pictured, joined the Qantas magazine publisher Medium Rare Content Agency in Jan 2023 as Content Director and, more recently, Editor.

Prior to that, she spent two decades working at luxury titles, *Vogue Australia* & *Elle Australia*.

Leek will work closely with her predecessor, Kirsten Galliot, who now takes up the role of Head of Content, Travel & Business.

Qantas Magazine just recorded its highest circulation since 2012 with 529,000 readers.



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Tasting Hong Kong with Leong



HONG Kong Tourism Board (HKTB) recently treated esteemed travel, lifestyle media, and culinary experts to an exclusive evening hosted at the popular Cantonese restaurant Flower

Drum in Melbourne.

Australian TV personality and food critic, Melissa Leong, was among the prestigious guests, having just returned from a visit to Hong Kong.

During the event, Leong (pictured) shared her top tips on how to make the most of the dining destination.

The evening paid homage to Hong Kong's rich culinary heritage, featuring a delicious menu that showcased the city's signature dishes, created by well-respected Executive Chef, Anthony Lui. *JM*

VA naked incident

A VIRGIN Australia flight from Perth to Melbourne was disrupted on Mon after a male passenger allegedly ran naked through the cabin and knocked a crew member to the floor.

According to witnesses on board the flight, the unruly traveller was restrained and handcuffed by two air marshals, with three other male passengers also helping to tackle the offender, after he "suddenly went bananas running up and down the aisle and bashing on the cockpit door".

The plane was turned around an hour into the flight and upon returning to Perth Airport, Australian Federal Police officers arrested the disruptive man, who will now appear before Perth magistrates court in Jun.

ATIA UPDATE

from Dean Long, CEO



AS WE await the release of the Aviation White Paper, there has been much speculation about the role of an Industry Ombudsman for the

aviation sector.

This was highlighted last week in the submissions put forward by both our domestic airlines, which now having a position of in-principle support for the idea of an Ombudsman.

In Apr, the United States' new refund mandates for airlines and travel agents came into effect, which has ramped up speculation that a similar policy should be rolled out here.

Given this policy impacts our members, ATIA has been reviewing and working with our global partners to better understand the positive and negatives of this new policy.

On overall net benefit, this policy just meets that threshold, but it also contains some crazy provisions which no company (agent or airline) should be held to account for.

The first of these is if the flight

is cancelled for whatever reason, a consumer will be entitled to a refund, including taxes and commissions.

That's right, including taxes which have already been paid and won't be refunded to the airline or agent; and the commission which an agent has been paid for acquiring the booking.

Secondly, the US Government has also mandated that agents provide full refunds to clients regardless of whether an airline refunded the money to them.

It appears the lessons of COVID have not been learnt and currently all agents that sell air to or within the USA are liable to provide refunds if requested by the consumer following a cancelled flight.

ATIA has been working with Federal Government, Opposition, crossbenchers, and key public servants to ensure they have the best advice moving forward to make good decisions.

The government was in opposition when it supported our industry and now we need them to learn the lessons of the COVID travel credit debacle and not impose a policy which would most certainly cause the mass closure of businesses.

IHG crowning Egypt

TWO new Crowne Plaza hotels will open in Egypt in 2028 under a new management deal between IHG Hotels and Resorts and Urbnlanes Development.

Crowne Plaza Cairo New Administrative Capital will feature 110 rooms along with a restaurant and sky bar, located close to government ministries.

Additionally, Crowne Plaza New Cairo Yellow will be located near the city's existing centre, with 180 rooms positioned close to business parks and Cairo International Airport.

Holiday with Cathay

CATHAY Pacific has launched an expanded holiday website allowing travellers to package airfares with hotels and activities in 250,000 destinations globally, with Cathay members able to earn Asia Miles with each booking.

Cathay Holidays is a white-label branded platform powered by Expedia Group technology.

Presently, Cathay Holidays is available in Hong Kong, Japan and Singapore, however **Travel Daily** has contacted the Hong Kong carrier about whether the site will be expanded to Australia.

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Four Seasons by jet

FOUR Seasons has launched its 2026 calendar of Private Jet Journeys featuring a range of adventures themed on culinary, wellness and culture.

Five immersive trips ranging from 13-22 days feature in the line-up, taking travellers to a variety of cities across multiple continents.

Australia stars in two of the itineraries, with Sydney forming part of the 'Timeless Encounters' tour, which begins in the Hawaiian city of Kona and visits Tahiti, Bali, Thailand, India, Dubai, Czech Republic and London.

Travellers on the 'Ancient Explorer' trip will visit the Great Barrier Reef and Daintree Rainforest, staying at Silky Oaks Lodge, part of the Baillie Lodges portfolio.

Guests fly on a customised 48-seat Airbus A321LRneo jet operated by Titan Airways, which features lie-flat beds and an onboard social lounge.

Four Seasons Executive VP and Chief Commercial Officer, Marc Speichert, said its private jet touring delivers unparalleled comfort.

"Our goal is to create connections with travellers of this generation and the next, fostering a legacy of transformative experiences that extend far beyond the journey," Speichert said.

TWENTY NEW PORTS FOR SILVERSEA

ULTRA-LUXE cruise brand Silversea has unveiled its 2027 world cruise, with new destinations making up one-quarter of the port line-up.

Silversea's 'Three Oceans' global circumnavigation will set sail from Los Angeles on board *Silver Dawn* on 08 Jan 2027 bound for the Danish capital of Copenhagen, where she will arrive 149 days later on 07 Jun.

In between, travellers can visit 80 ports in 35 countries, among which will be 20 new ports for the Silversea world voyage, including calls in Namibia, Angola, Ghana and Gambia along the west coast of Africa.

The adventurous voyage has been split into three segments, comprised of Los Angeles to Brisbane; Brisbane to Cape Town; and Cape Town to Copenhagen.

Guests will have the chance to spend more time in port, with 11 overnight stays dotted



throughout the itinerary in ports such as Honolulu, Papeete, Brisbane, Cairns, Benoa, Cape Town and Bordeaux.

Late evening departures have also been scheduled in ports such as Kandy and Port Elizabeth to allow travellers to engage in full-day adventures such as the Yala National Park and safari drives.

Silversea President Bert Hernandez said the Three Oceans World Cruise broadens the line's

industry-leading extended sailings.

"[Guests] will explore more than 50 UNESCO World Heritage Sites, discover 20 destinations that have never been visited on a Silversea World Cruise, and attend four exclusive World Cruise events - bespoke experiences, curated by our team of experts."

A pre-sale event for the voyage will open for Venetian Society members on 20 Jun, with general sales opening on 27 Jun. *ML*

BOSS House Bali

FASHION label BOSS has joined forces with The Luxe Nomad to debut its first-luxury hotel offering in Bali.

BOSS House is situated in Canggu and features one five-bedroom and one six-bedroom villa, each with ensuite, along with a private gym, ice bath and a silver spiral water slide leading down to an expansive pool.

Hyatt heats up Atona hot springs across Japan

HYATT will debut its luxury Atona hot spring Ryokan brand in three Japanese cities from 2026, with Yufu, Yakushima and Hakone first to open doors.

Atona is a joint-venture between Japanese hospitality asset management firm Kiraku and Hyatt Hotels Corporation.

The two organisations have also launched the Atona Impact Fund investment vehicle aimed

at developing new Atona projects, with the first round raising ¥10 billion Japanese yen.

"Through the ATONA brand, we look forward to introducing Japan's hot springs and new destinations to our World of Hyatt members, and international and domestic travelers alike," said Hyatt Vice President Japan and Micronesia, Sam Sakamura.



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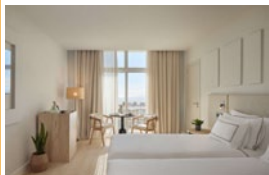
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To celebrate Vivid Sydney, **Capella Sydney** has introduced a 'Light Up the Night' experience for those eager to elevate their visit to the winter light festival. Priced from \$300 per person, the journey invites guests to enjoy a two-course dining experience at the hotel's Brasserie 1930, followed by a luxurious private harbour cruise. Guests will also be treated to a complimentary glass of champagne along the Vivid Sydney Light Walk.



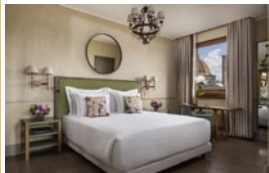
Tempo by Hilton Nashville Downtown in the United States has introduced Topgolf Swing Suite, a new venue where groups can enjoy two interactive simulators featuring golf and non-golf games like zombie dodgeball, hockey, baseball, football, and carnival games. The amenity also offers a curated selection of food and beverage, including sliders with smoked bacon and pimento cheese, bourbon BBQ wings, premium beer, cocktails, and more.



Melia Hotels International has announced the opening of **Melia Lloret de Mar**, its newest property in Catalonia, Spain. Located in the coastal town of Lloret de Mar, the five-star hotel is now welcoming guests after a renovation and rebrand from its former identity as Gran Hotel Monterrey. The property comprises of 200 Mediterranean-inspired guestrooms, pool and spa facilities, and a state-of-the-art fitness centre.



In a sweet collaboration with Brooki Bakehouse, **QT Gold Coast** is set to feature some of the bakehouse's signature creations during its Q's and Tea event on 01 Jun, where owner Brooke Saward will share her recipe for success. Those who can't make the event can still savour bite-sized treats from Brooki Bakehouse as part of the hotel's iconic QTea High Tea experience throughout Jun.



In an effort to expand its Italian portfolio, Tivoli Hotels & Resorts has transformed Hotel NH Collection Firenze Palazzo Gaddi into **Tivoli Palazzo Gaddi Firenze Hotel** in Florence. The 86-key property has recently undergone internal renovations to preserve its renaissance history, with all rooms boasting authentic period furnishings and Florentine art.

SYD seeds greener future



SYDNEY Airport has received an Airports Council International Green Airports Recognition 2024 - Biodiversity and Nature-Based Solutions award - in recognition of its First Nations approach to wetlands restoration.

The accolade highlights the work of Sydney Airport's partner and Indigenous land care experts, Wildflower, in restoring the wetlands and enhancing biodiversity around Mill Pond, Engine Ponds, and Mill Stream.

The Wildflower team (**pictured**) works to regenerate the environment by removing noxious weeds, planting thousands of native species, and collecting seeds for propagation.

"We are proud to be increasing the biodiversity of the wetlands while supporting our partner, Wildflower, in its mission to provide meaningful and culturally safe employment to young people in the Indigenous community," said Jake Atkins, Sydney Airport GM of Environment and Sustainability. "It's an honour to have the

Airports Council International recognise this project and the incredible work our partner, Wildflower, is doing to bring biodiversity back to Sydney Airport's wetlands." *JM*

Aman offers more

AMAN Resorts has unveiled a calendar of new experiences across its five resorts in Indonesia, including a whale shark excursion and underwater wellness retreat at its Moyo Island property.

Guests at Amanjiwo, Central Java can now enjoy two new unique experiences at the Yogyakarta Royal Palace, while Amankila Bali will offer a royal dinner and private guided tour at Ujung Water Palace from Aug.

Additionally, Amandari Bali will host culinary events open to both guests and non-residents in the lead up to the property's 35th anniversary dinners in Oct.

Guests can also combine up to four Aman destinations with the 'Undiscovered Indonesia' offer.

Abercrombie & Kent

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