

# Travel Daily

First with the news

Thursday 21st Nov 2024

MTA Advisor Danielle Lawson



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## Today's issue of TD

*Travel Daily* today features eight pages of travel news including a photo page from **Norwegian Cruise Line** and our **Business Events News**, plus full pages from:

- Tourism NT
- AAT Kings
- Helloworld - Global Stars

## TA's wicket campaign

A NEW Tourism Australia (TA) advertising campaign, 'Howzat for a holiday?', will target Indian tourists ahead of tomorrow's test series between the two nations.

The campaign, launching today, will encourage Indian travellers to plan and book an Australian holiday, and will run throughout the five-test series.

Australia's Captain Pat Cummins has teamed up with TA's brand ambassador Ruby the Roo, in a commercial which features the MCG, Cape Tribulation, Kangaroo Island, and Rottneest Island.

## Global spotlight for ATIA

AUSTRALIAN Travel Industry Association (ATIA) CEO Dean Long has been appointed as a co-Vice Chair on the Executive Committee of the World Travel Agents Associations Alliance (WTAAA).

The entity's new leadership team, which works to address issues faced by travel advisors worldwide, was unveiled recently at the WTAAA General Assembly and board meeting in Athens.

As co-Vice Chair, Long will work alongside Paula Cortes from Latin American tourism organisation Folatur to support the work of newly appointed Chair Wendy Paradis, President of the Canadian Travel Agencies and Travel Advisors (ACTA).

"I am confident that this diverse and experienced team will guide the WTAAA to new heights of influence and effectiveness," Paradis commented.

The gathering in Athens also saw the organisation launch its strategic plan for 2025, with



enhanced member engagement and communication key features.

Central to its focus for next year is addressing ongoing complexities of New Distribution Capability (NDC) and modern airline retailing, two issues being championed by WTAAA Executive Director, Otto De Vries.

Other key global issues include professional fee challenges and providing agents with resources needed to combat travel fraud.

Paradis replaces outgoing Chair Andrew Bowman, who will continue to play a role in the organisation moving forward. *ML*

## Earn big with AAT

AGENTS can get some of their Christmas shopping done courtesy of AAT Kings and Inspiring Journeys via a new incentive.

AAT Kings is offering a \$100 gift card for every new booking deposited in the remaining days of Nov, with Inspiring Journeys doubling the reward to \$200.

Rewards are uncapped and to find out more, see **page 10**.

## HLO thanks its stars

HELLOWORLD is expressing its gratitude to partner suppliers and destinations which took part in its 2024 Global Stars fam, which has recently returned from an adventure in Southern California.

Supporting the trip were United Airlines, Intrepid, Cover-More Travel Insurance and Disneyland.

Agents were hosted to some great experiences by Visit Greater Palm Springs, San Diego Tourism Authority, Visit Anaheim and Visit Huntington Beach - more from the trip on **pages five, 11 and 12**.

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## US to boost Cairns

FIJI Airways' new route to Cairns (TD yesterday) will entice more Americans to the destination, Tourism Tropical North Queensland (TTNQ) hopes.

FJ will launch direct services from Nadi to Cairns from 10 Apr, which TTNQ Chief Executive Officer Mark Olsen is confident will speed up the recovery from the North America market.

The new route will cut nearly three hours off the fastest flying time to Cairns from Los Angeles, bringing it to just 16 hours, also trimming times from SFO.

"The new service to Cairns via Fiji presents the opportunity to bring an estimated 52,000 additional American visitors annually, injecting more than \$160 million into the region's economy," Olsen said.

## No material impact: WEB

WEB Travel Group has confirmed it owes around \$32 million more to suppliers as of 30 Sep 2024, after it was advised by auditors on the eve of releasing 1H25 results that it needed to change accounting methodology (TD breaking news yesterday).

According to an ASX statement posted yesterday, the adjustments made will not have a material impact to the company's earnings or financial position.

As a result of the change, the Web Travel Group said it will see a \$2.5 million increase in EBITDA

in 1H25, however it has also altered its EBITDA figure for FY24 to reflect a drop of \$1.5 million.

Web Travel Group confirmed the accounting change has also seen an approximate \$32m decrease to retained earnings as at 31 Mar 2023, reflecting adjustments related to prior years.

The company was keen to communicate that these changes are non-cash in nature and reflect timing differences in recognition across periods.

Speaking on a conference call this morning, Web Travel Group MD John Guscic said the adjustments amounted to "a lot of work for no change".

"We went into a trading halt for two days and we have been working night and day to make sure these numbers accurately reflect what's in the note.

"The changes have now been determined not to be material relating to [our] earnings and financial position," Guscic said.

The share price has rallied this morning since being reinstated.

WEB will now aim to release 1H25 results on 27 Nov. AB

## Two slicers added

TRAVEL fintech business Slice Pay has welcomed Deniz Ogutveren and Adam Israel as its two new Business Development Managers to strengthen its industry presence in Vic and NSW.

Ogutveren takes charge of Slice Pay's Vic market and brings extensive experience in fintech and strategic partnerships.

Israel will take on similar duties in NSW - more appointments on page eight.

## Mark your Territory

BECOME an NT expert and win a trip to the Top End.

Join Tourism NT's live webinar to discover the destination, and explore the "set-jetting" travel trend, inspired by popular TV shows, such as the Netflix's series *Territory* - see page 9.

## Entire Black Fri deal

SAVINGS of up to \$3,150 per couple are now available on 2025 Rocky Mountaineer train journeys from Entire Travel Group as part of its Black Friday special offers.

Available until 05 Dec, discounts of up to \$2,250 apply to eligible Canadian itineraries of six nights or more in Goldleaf and Silverleaf but rise to \$3,150 on Entire's two American packages of five nights or more.

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## PayID connects to Mint

PAYID has been integrated as an accepted transfer method for travel agencies remitting client accounts using Mint Payments.

The adoption of PayID means payments can be received in real-time, with notifications sent upon receipt and granting faster access.

PayID has been active in Australia since 2018 and is now supported by more than 100 banks and financial institutions for customers to transfer funds using a mobile number, email address or ABN as an identifier.

Agents can generate invoices embedded with a custom payment link, with customers entering a unique PayID into their banking app or website.

Credit card functionality remains unchanged and an accepted form of payment, with no changes to fee structures.

Mint Payments CEO, Alex Teoh, urged agents to do away with payment processing fees and



offer a low-cost alternative that aligns with the Federal Govt's push for new payment systems.

"This integration eliminates the inefficiencies of traditional bank transfers and positions merchants to meet the demands of a modern, security-conscious, and cost-sensitive market.

"PayID is just the beginning; we're committed to rolling out more payment options to give merchants and their customers greater flexibility and convenience," Teoh commented.

Mint's technology allows agents to consolidate PayID and credit card transactions to provide a single view of inbound cash flow.

## Air NZ reviews LGW

AIR New Zealand is coy on its reported plans to restore services between London and Auckland, telling *Travel Daily* that it is exploring new network options.

It was revealed yesterday that Air New Zealand has secured slots at London Gatwick to operate daily long-haul flights from Jul next year, after being knocked back for Heathrow slots.

"We are constantly reviewing our network and we actively listen to the feedback," a spokesperson for the carrier said.

"It's not uncommon for airlines to apply for slots in new airports as part of this network review process, and London is one of those destinations New Zealand has a very special connection to and we continue to explore options," Air NZ added.



## AAA winners named

INNOVATION and excellence were on display last night, as the country's best airports were revealed at the Australian Airports Association (AAA) National Airport Industry Awards.

This year's event in Brisbane drew 81 nominations in 16 categories, acknowledging efforts across infrastructure, operations, leadership, innovation, sustainability, and diversity.

Capital City Airport of the Year was awarded to Adelaide Airport, while Major Airport of the Year was taken out by Cairns Airport.

Meanwhile, Sunshine Coast Airport claimed the Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Leadership Award for its Australian-first use of accessible technologies.

"We were thrilled to receive so many entries this year and it highlights the wide range of projects and improvements being carried out at Australian airports," AAA Chief Executive Officer Simon Westaway said.

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# EXPLORERS

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## Infinity's epic reward

INFINITY Holidays kicked off its 'epic' incentive trip this week, whisking away 15 top-selling Aussie travel advisors to Mexico.

The all-expenses-paid getaway will blend luxury, adventure, and culture, featuring a range of activities, from exploring ancient Mayan ruins and indulging in world-class cuisine, to enjoying exclusive beachside events.

Throughout the trip, the group will document their journey, sharing exclusive photos and behind-the-scenes moments via the official Infinity Holidays Facebook Group, [HERE](#).

"We are proud to recognise and reward the incredible travel advisors who continuously go above and beyond to create unforgettable experiences for their clients," said James Whiting, GM at Infinity Holidays.

"Our epic rewards trip is a chance for us to show our appreciation and offer our top advisors the beauty of Mexico."

## Catterall celebrates 40 years

LUXE by itravel's Megan Catterall (pictured) recently celebrated 40 years in the travel industry, during which time the agency said she had excelled in selling corporate travel, retail, and cruise holidays.

Catterall recently celebrated her 40th anniversary in style, hosting a special event with almost 90 clients on board a Bravo Cruise of Performing Arts cruise, treating attendees to gift bags, dinners, and opera performances.

"Relationships are the key to my success, and I'm proud of what I've achieved in my 40 years in this industry I love," she said.

Catterall's journey in the travel industry began with work experience at API Travel, which set her on her path to owning her own business.

"The consortia that Steve Labroski has built is totally awesome, and I just love it," Catterall added.



"Being part of Virtuoso through LUXE by itravel has also reignited my drive...I have my passion back because I am with my tribe."

Catterall has earned numerous awards over the years, including AFTA Corporate Consultant of the Year (1998), CLIA Agency Promotion of the Year (2019), and CLIA Home-Based Agent of the Year (2022).

Catterall was also this year named a Virtuoso ICON for Cruise Luxury Sales. MS



A TAP Air Portugal aircraft was recently grounded for four days as dozens of hamsters ran amok in the cabin.

The plane became stranded on the runway in the Azores, after almost 150 hamsters broke free from their cages, and conducted an impromptu game of hide-and-seek.

Baggage handlers were the first to discover the carriers holding the creatures had been chewed through, setting off a mad hunt before they could gnaw their way through the aircraft's electrical wiring.

*The New York Post* reported the hamsters were actually meant to be on an earlier flight, but were denied entry due to - believe it or not - the poor quality of their cages.

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## Qantas rips into safety

**QANTAS** has teamed up with Surf Life Saving Australia (SLSA) to promote water safety ahead of summer and support the not-for-profit organisation's mission to achieve zero preventable deaths in Australian waters.

The duo will launch a free online training tool called Beach Passport, which is designed to impart the public with basic water safety knowledge and takes around 10 minutes to complete.

To encourage people to use Beach Passport, Qantas is providing 150 QF points to anyone who completes the course, along with the opportunity to go into a draw to win one million points.

"Safety is fundamental to us as the national carrier, and this partnership underscores our dedication to upholding the highest safety standards for Australians and visitors, whether on the ground or in the air," Qantas Group CEO Vanessa Hudson said.

"Our goal is that Beach Passport becomes a regular tool for all beachgoers for years to come."



## Global Stars shine in the US



**SOUTHERN** California turned on its best weather and played host to Helloworld's Global Stars incentive trip for 2024, co-hosted by United Airlines, Cover-More Travel, Intrepid and Disneyland.

The retail group's top sellers were whisked off to the USA, and the state offering so much to see and do, they had to be split into four and sent on different Californian mini-itineraries.

One group headed south to San Diego, another to nearby Anaheim, a third ventured to Huntington Beach on the Orange County outskirts and a fourth headed east to Palm Springs.

Highlights for various groups included an ice hockey game featuring the Anaheim Ducks - the only NHL franchise in history to be formed and named in response to a Disney movie, plus a visit to Disneyland itself.

Other groups enjoyed surfing

lessons in Huntington Beach and a speedboat blast around San Diego's Big Bay.

Helloworld National Sales Manager, Peter Douglas, said it was great to return to the city which hosted the first Global Stars family during the 50th anniversary year of Viva Holidays.

"The agents deserved all the spoiling they received for their incredible support of Viva Holidays, ReadyRooms and GO Holidays," Douglas said.

"As well as having some incredible experiences, a real highlight was the time we all got to spend together celebrating."

Following their separate adventures around the Golden State, the group reconvened on the rooftop of the JW Marriott Anaheim for the Ultimate Global Stars celebration and gala dinner.

The Anaheim group is **pictured** above enjoying Disneyland. *ML*

## Eric goes to water

**THE** actor famed for his portrayal of *Modern Family* character Cameron Tucker has been revealed as the godfather of NCL's *Norwegian Aqua*.

Eric Stonestreet will be the ambassador for the ship, which launches in Apr next year.

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## NCL bringing agents even MORE at Sea

**NORWEGIAN** Cruise Line's (NCL) long-standing Partners First philosophy has provided even MORE opportunities for trade partners to experience the brand at sea this year. NCL has hosted an increased number of travel agent partners across a variety of ships and destinations including Alaska, the Mediterranean and the Mexican Riviera.

**NCL'S** Brand and Marketing Summit on board *Norwegian Bliss* was hosted by NCL's Damian Borg and Maria Bellizzi, and supported by the LA Convention and Tourism board. Attendees enjoyed the best combination of seeing LA and cruising the Mexican Riviera.



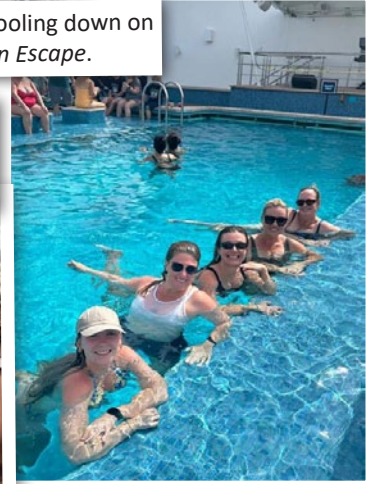
**DAMIAN** Borg, NCL; Jess Cudmore, FCTG; Lauryn Woodward, Cruiseeco; Astrid Maier, Cruise HQ; and Anna Russell, Clean Cruising.



**MARIA** Bellizzi, NCL; Jacky Jacobs, Ignite Travel Group; Lauryn Woodward, Cruiseeco; Candice Van Den Bos, Infinity Holidays NZ; and Anna Russell, Clean Cruising.



**MEGAN** Porter, NCL with NCL Legends on a shore excursion in Rome.



**NCL** Legends cooling down on board *Norwegian Escape*.

**MEGAN** Porter, NCL with Lauren Steele from My Cruises.



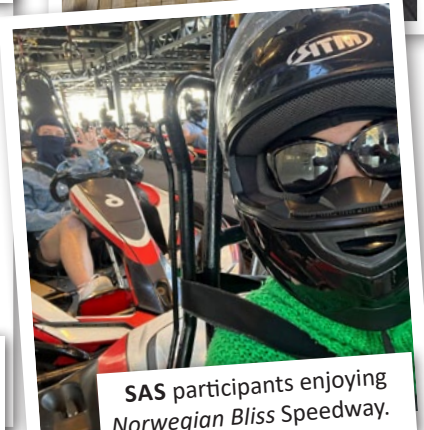
**SO MUCH MORE** to Experience at Sea with NCL.



**SAS** group participants enjoying Alaska hosted by Sheena Smith, Business Development Specialist, Vic.



**ANGELA** Middleton and Megan Porter from NCL post-show with the Choir of Man cast and NCL Legends.



**SAS** participants enjoying *Norwegian Bliss* Speedway.



## MICE playbook

### SINGAPORE Tourism

Board has introduced its new MICE Venue Sustainability Playbook to help events venues worldwide to manage their carbon emissions.

Known simply as The Playbook - **CLICK HERE** - the guide is packed with practical recommendations for venues to enhance energy efficiency, water conservation and waste management in line with sustainability objectives.

Also featured is a series of consolidated whole-of-government support schemes being used across Singapore to drive decarbonisation city-wide.

The book comes following a 2023 MICE Industry Carbon and Waste Baseline study, which aggregated baseline sustainability data points on energy, water and waste from six purpose-built MICE venues across the city.

Findings from the study revealed the average MICE venue-related carbon emissions per attendee stood at 14.3kg carbon dioxide, while energy consumption amounted to 94% of MICE-related venue emissions.

These baseline figures have been included to provide venues worldwide with a set of emissions data which can be monitored and compared against annually.

## FACE-TO-FACE BOOSTS REVENUE

**AUSTRALIAN** business professionals expect to generate up to 36% higher revenue and close to 37% more deals through meeting face-to-face as opposed to online, according to new research from Accor.

The study was conducted via a poll of 9,000 adults who travel for business, with 1,000 sampled across nine countries - Australia, the US, UK, India, Brazil, France, Germany, UAE, and China.

While digital tools such as video conferencing were useful, the research pool agreed that a human connection generated via a face-to-face meeting was far more effective in driving business success and performance.

Across the nine countries, 67% of respondents cited physical meetings with clients and colleagues as 'very important', with the Australian segment among the highest at 60%.

Business professionals in the



survey said they expect to close a much higher proportion of deals if they are able to conduct all meetings face-to-face.

"This sentiment is shared by a majority of the professionals surveyed, with 81% indicating they believe they would achieve better business outcomes if they prioritised in-person meetings."

The data showed 35% of respondents believe the time and cost involved in meeting in-person as being worth the effort,

with some saying one in-person meeting achieves the same as three virtual meetings.

Nearly four-in-ten respondents said in-person meetings played a major role in boosting company culture, with 68% saying they prefer conducting presentations in person over virtually.

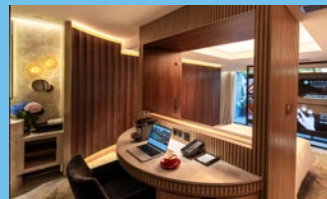
"The potential 36% revenue gain from meeting face-to-face will be worth billions to the global economy," said Accor's Chief Sales officer, Sophie Hulgard. *ML*

## The Transforming Room by Pullman

**FOLLOWING** two years of research on consumer behaviour, Pullman Hotels has unveiled a new concept room designed to meet the varied needs of today's travellers.

The Transforming Room (pictured) transitions through design changes as needed into formats designed for wellness, work, socialising or relaxation.

The high-spec, high-tech room



is designed as a place to work, meet, sleep, exercise, meet and socialise, and will play a key role in the evolution of Pullman's focus on flexible environments.

## W Mel for the win

**W MELBOURNE** is reporting a 20% jump in the number of conferences and events signed in 2024 under General Manager, Krister Svensson and projected 2025 growth of another 30%.

Since starting in the role a year ago, Svensson has helped grow the property's revenue per available room (RevPAR) by 10.9%.

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## APPOINTMENTS

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[appointments@traveldaily.com.au](mailto:appointments@traveldaily.com.au)

**Mandarin Oriental Hotel Group** has named **Tiffany Cooper** as Head of Development Americas. Cooper will play a pivotal role in leading the development and investment initiatives for the Americas, focusing on the American market, as well as Canada and LATAM.

**Travel Industry Mentor Experience** has appointed **Ingrid Berthelsen** as the newest Director on the organisation's board. Berthelsen, who was a graduate of TIME In 2015, was appointed Victoria state representative in 2020. She is the Managing Director & co-founder of travel industry representation business Evolution Travel Collective.

**Globus family of brands** has welcomed **Darren Sinclair** as Business Development Manager. He will manage southern New South Wales & the ACT, effective immediately. Sinclair has a history of almost 10 years in the industry.

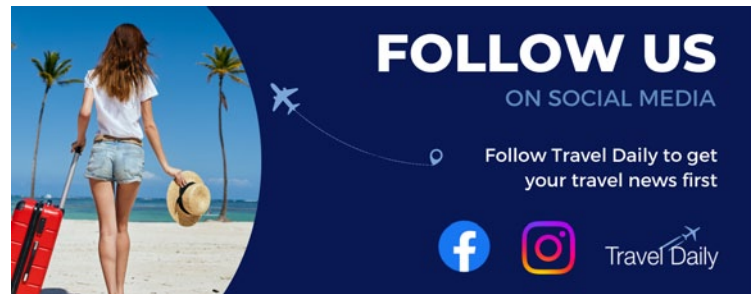
Four new members of the **Tourism Australia** board have been appointed. **Jenny Lambert**, who has more than 40 years' experience in policy and advocacy, will join, representing Accommodation Australia as its National Policy Director; **Michael Lee** brings extensive experience in his capacity as a former Minister for Tourism; **Tim Yeend** has served as an Associate Secretary to the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, and previously was the Australian Ambassador to the World Trade Organization; and **Peter Laurance** brings valuable experience as an owner and developer of major tourism attractions, including theme parks, hotels and resorts.

**Enrique Solari** has been appointed General Manager at **Almare, a Luxury Collection Resort, Isla Mujeres, Adult All-Inclusive**. Solari arrives to lead the recently launched property from his role as General Manager of The Haciendas, The Luxury Collection, where he led and developed innovative business strategies for five luxury Marriott International properties.

**John Luckett** has been appointed President of Hospitality Operations at **Kessler Collection**. Formerly Kessler's Chief Operating Officer, Luckett will be returning to the brand, expanding on his previous 15-year tenure, and overseeing the company's hospitality, sales and marketing, information technology, human resources, and operations sectors

**Michael Diaz** has been promoted Chief Strategy Officer at **Driftwood Hospitality Management**. Diaz will focus on long-term planning and strategic growth initiatives in his new role. He previously served as Chief Operating Officer, since the company's inception in 1998, managing Driftwood's rapidly expanding global hotel portfolio and operations

**Tyler Gosnell** has joined the **US Travel Association** as Managing Director International Inbound Travel. The newly created role will see Gosnell coalesce the leading players in the US' inbound segment.



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## GC prioritises accessibility



**GOLD** Coast Airport has partnered with Aspect Autism Friendly to launch a new initiative to deliver a more accessible airport experience for people of all abilities.

Aspect Autism Friendly conducted an environmental assessment of the airport to identify key areas for potential accessibility improvement, with individuals of various abilities also providing their input.

The airport will use the findings to develop a comprehensive report that will recommend facility and process upgrades.

The report's insights also have the potential to shape the Australian Airports Association Guidelines for Disabilities and Hidden Disabilities, setting a new benchmark for airports around the country.

"Gold Coast Airport is focused on making its terminal and precinct welcoming and inclusive for people of all abilities," said Brian McGuckin, Queensland Airports Limited's (QAL) Chief

Property and Planning Officer, and Executive Sponsor of QAL's internal Accessibility Committee.

"We are on a path of continual improvement, and Aspect's multi-disability environmental assessment will help identify gaps and opportunities to upgrade our facilities.

"Ultimately, we want to empower and encourage everyone to travel." JM

**Pictured:** Dr Tom Tutton, Executive Manager, Aspect Autism Friendly; Paul Nunnari, Guest Assessor; and Tanya Matty, Customer Experience & Terminal Operations, Gold Coast Airport.

## SIA adjusts DRW

**SINGAPORE** Airlines will introduce evening departures from Singapore and overnight return flights from Darwin on selected days of the week, with view to improving flexibility and convenience for passengers.

The changes will take effect from 30 Mar 2025.



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**Tuesday 26 November** 11.00am (AEST) | 9.30am (ACST) | 1.00pm (NZST)

**Wednesday 27 November** 1.00pm (AEST) | 11.30pm (ACST) | 3.00pm (NZST)

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Valid for all Inspiring Journeys and AAT Kings Guided Holidays bookings made and deposited during November 2024, for travel from 01 November 2024 to 31 December 2026. e-Gift cards will be issued and sent to advisors weekly. Entry is open to all Travel Advisors who are employed by an accredited travel agency for the duration of the incentive. The incentive begins at 12:00am (AEST) on Friday 01st November 2024 and closes 11:59pm (AEST) Saturday 30th November 2024 ("Incentive Period"). Entries received after this time and date will be deemed invalid. Entrants must during the Incentive Period: Sell and deposit 1 x Inspiring Journeys booking to receive 1 x gift card to the value of A\$200. OR Sell and deposit 1 x AAT Kings Guided Holiday tour to receive 1 x gift card to the value of A\$100. For further details contact your Sales Manager.

GLOBAL STARS  
 SOUTHERN  
**CALIFORNIA**  
 2024

*Thank you!*

**Thank you to our amazing 2024 Global Stars for their unwavering support of Viva Holidays, ReadyRooms and GO Holidays and for being an integral part of our journey.**

We also extend our gratitude to Global Stars partners United Airlines, Intrepid, Disneyland Resort and Cover-More Travel Insurance, as well as to our destination partners who have played an instrumental role in making this reward trip so successful.

A big thank you to our regional hosts, Visit Greater Palm Springs, San Diego Tourism Authority, Visit Anaheim and Visit Huntington Beach for helping us showcase the world-class experiences Southern California has to offer.

Cinzia Burnes | Chief Operating Officer & Executive Director





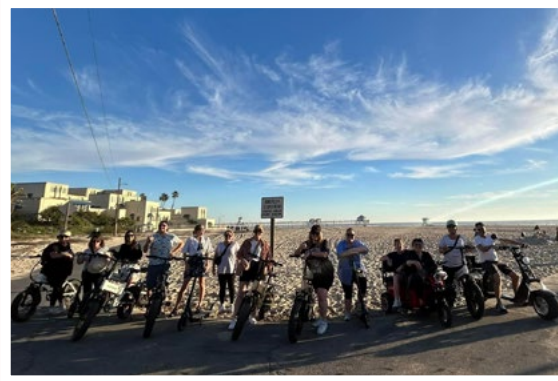
# GLOBAL STARS SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA 2024



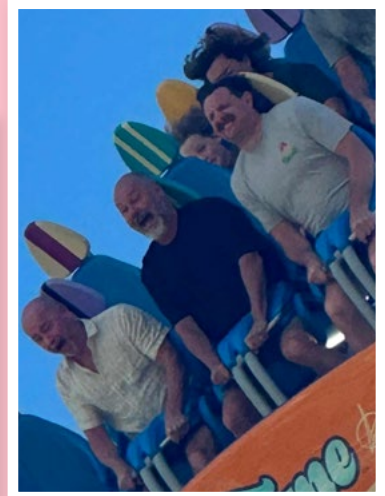
## Global Stars Wowed in Southern California



The 2024 Global Stars program has wrapped up for 2024. This year the itinerary was so jam packed full of must-see destinations and experiences that it had to be split into 4 groups!



Each exploring all that Southern California had to offer across San Diego, Palm Springs, Anaheim and Huntington Beach before coming together for the ultimate Global Stars Celebration and Gala Dinner Event on the rooftop of the JW Marriot Anaheim.



The highlights were many and varied from an ice-hockey game with the Anaheim Ducks, to visits to Disneyland and an exclusive dessert party watching the world of colour – ONE incredible light show, to surfing lessons and s'mores at Huntington Beach and a speedboat adventure in San Diego's Big Bay.

