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## Today's issue of TD

*Travel Daily* today features a cover wrap from **Silversea**, six pages of news, including our **Corporate Update**, plus full pages from:

- **Viva Holidays (VisitBritain)**
- **Air Mauritius**

## Virgin-QR flights ticked

**VIRGIN** Australia and Qatar Airways have been given a preliminary green light to commence selling 28 weekly return flights between Doha and Brisbane, Melbourne, Perth & Sydney (**TD** breaking news).

In making its decision, the ACCC said granting interim authorisation will allow the two carriers the lead-time to plan for new services from Jun 2025.

While preliminary approval is a positive step for the alliance, in undertaking its decision the ACCC said that if final regulatory approval is denied, customers who have booked the proposed new services would be protected.

"Affected customers will be given the option of a refund or re-accommodation on a suitable alternative flight at no additional charge and would not be out of pocket for any reasonably foreseeable costs if these proposed new services ultimately don't get approved," ACCC

Deputy Chair Keogh said.

Before giving final approval, the ACCC said it is carefully considering concerns raised around wet lease arrangements.

Approval for QR's 25% stake in VA is yet to be granted. **AB**

## Slot reform passes

**REFORMS** of Sydney Airport's problematic slots system passed through the Senate last night, paving the way to improve access for new entrants and clamp down on airline misbehaviour.

Misuse of slot offences will be enforceable through the courts, which could issue civil penalties of up to \$99,000 per offence.

Specific slot offences under the reforms include: failure to use an allocated slot; flight operations not in accordance with slot requirements; applying for slots with no reasonable prospects of use; and failure to return or transfer unused slots.


## Nova class is here

**AUSTRALIANS** can now board the new Silversea Nova class vessel that everyone is talking about, with the modern luxury of *Silver Nova* sailing local waters.

The ship has been designed with the new type of luxury travellers in mind - see **cover page**.

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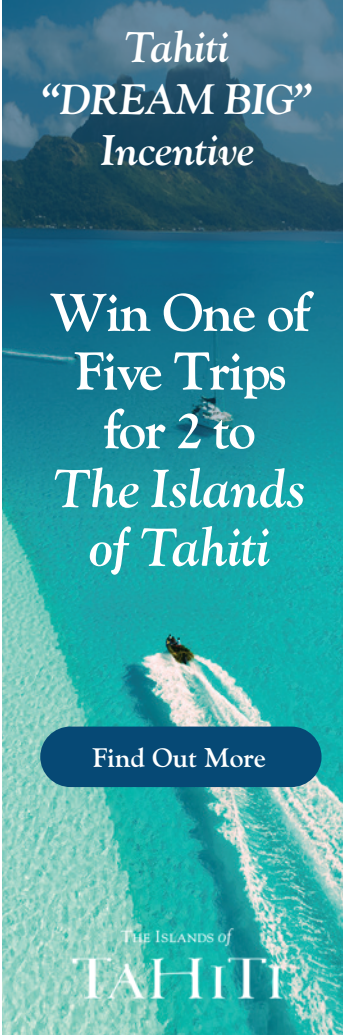



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 Wendy Wu Tours



## TNZ training refresh

**TOURISM** New Zealand (TNZ) has updated its 100% Pure New Zealand Specialist Programme, aiming to help agents sell NZ as a year-round destination.

Designed specifically for travel sellers, the initiative is delivered in bite-sized modules (between three- and seven-minutes long), covering essential things to know about New Zealand's off-peak seasons, such as how best to get around, the weather, and suggested itineraries.

"The refreshed training will ensure travel sellers are just as clued up about New Zealand's three off-peak seasons as they are about our summer," TNZ CEO Rene de Monchy said.

The revamped program has already received positive feedback since launching in India in Oct, and will roll out across TNZ's other markets, including Australia, in early 2025.

## Air travel gets personal

**TRAVELLERS** will enjoy more personalised in-flight experiences next year, as more airlines tap into AI, high-speed wi-fi, and VR technology, according to new research from Amadeus.

The travel tech company's *Travel Trends 2025* report, which explores the key trends set to shape the industry's future in 2025, found that air travel will reach "new heights" of personalisation next year.

More carriers are combining algorithmic entertainment with hyper-personalised in-flight systems that deliver content tailored to the individual flyer, based on their past preferences.

According to the report, more airlines will supply VR headsets to passengers in first and business class - in 2024, premium airline start-up Beond began handing out Apple Vision Pros to people



flying its Maldives route.

Despite the clear trend towards high-tech travel experiences, the report identified the rise of 'new heydays', fuelled by a desire to reconnect with the past.

The trend sees travellers seeking to relive gap years and honeymoons, revisiting cherished destinations, as well as prompting a surge in classic caravan and camping holiday.

The report also predicts 2025 will see a wave of group and solo adventures designed to spark genuine connections, inspiring the rise of apps such as PlateCulture, which offers the chance to savour authentic local cuisine in the homes of local hosts. *JM*

## Guangzhou takes off

**FLIGHTS** between Perth and China have taken off, with China Southern Airlines resuming non-stop services from Guangzhou.

The first flight from CAN departed last night, marking the addition of nearly 800 inbound seats to Perth each week.

## CTM is recruiting a National Operations Manager!

Take the next step in your travel career as CTM's National Operations Manager for AU/NZ. Reporting to the COO, this senior leadership role oversees key operational teams and drives transformational projects across CTM's award-winning, tech-driven travel operations.

If you have a good operational foundation and tech-savvy mindset, we'd love to hear from you!

FIND OUT MORE



## Viva Britain tours

**EXPERIENCE** Britain differently with Viva Holidays, with travel advisors also able to win a \$2,000 voucher for the wholesaler - see [page 7](#) for full details.

## Closer than you think

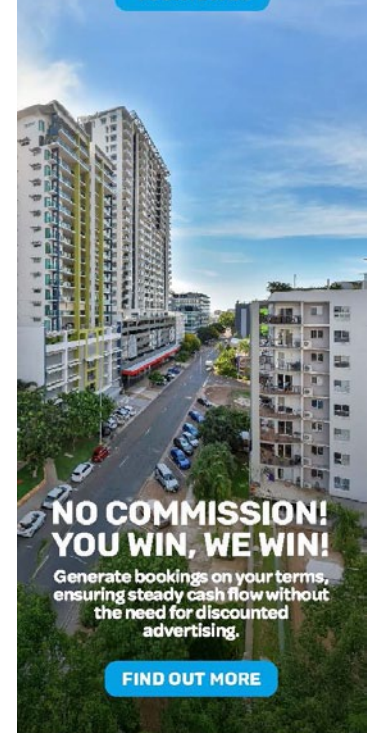
**MAURITIUS** is closer than you think, with travellers now able to score 30% off flights with the country's flag carrier Air Mauritius - more on [page 8](#).



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## Investors wipe away debt

**HURTIGRUTEN** has a new owner after being acquired by a consortium of existing investors from TDR Capital.

The transaction will significantly reduce the company's debt, with the investors wiping €1 billion owed from the books and leaving €400 million outstanding.

Under new owners Arini Capital Management, AlbaCore Capital and Barings, Hurtigruten will continue as a standalone company based in Oslo, however the transaction formally marks the final stage of Hurtigruten and HX (Hurtigruten Expeditions) separating from Jan 2025.

The company opted to split up its Norway coastal cruise business from its global expedition arm in 2020 to improve operations and commercial efficiency.

Torben Geisler, who led the Arini investment, said that Hurtigruten is a strong and storied brand that has made a name for itself for



over a century.

"Our investor group looks forward to backing the Hurtigruten management team and its employees to help the company achieve its significant potential while continuing to deliver exceptional travel experiences," Geisler added.

Hurtigruten added it is seeing strong demand in recent months, with 2025 bookings 24% higher than they were for 2024 at the same time last year.

The consortium was keen to stress that the change of ownership will have no practical implications for Hurtigruten's customer offering, business partners, or daily operations.

A final settlement for the transaction will be in Jan '25. *AB*

## CATO milestone

THE Council of Australian Tour Operators (CATO) Touring Academy has marked a new milestone, certifying over 300 agents and achieving more than 5,400 course completions to date.

The training platform is now on track to reach 1,000 active participants by the end of 2024, reflecting the growing demand for specialised touring expertise across the industry.

CATO Managing Director Brett Jardine explained, "the CATO Touring Academy is not only focused on learning - it revolutionises how agents' approach and sell touring".

"By equipping agents with the right tools and insights, we're helping them grow their businesses and forge stronger relationships with clients."

The self-paced learning platform is designed to equip agents with the skills and knowledge needed to boost touring sales - find out more [HERE](#).



**DECIN, CZECHIA**

Today's issue of *TD* is coming to you courtesy of Viking, aboard a European Christmas markets river cruise.

**AFTER** boarding the *Viking Beyla* in the Elbe River township of Decin, we will set sail north on our Christmas odyssey.

Decin is an ancient Bohemian town whose landscapes inspired the music of famed Polish composer Frederic Chopin.

The Elbe is one of the largest rivers in Central Europe, running almost 1100km from the Czech Republic (Czechia) through Germany to the North Sea.

Key ports include Dresden where we will visit the world's oldest Christmas market, as well as Meissen, Bad Schandau, Torgau and Mittenberg.



# contiki

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## Discover our River Cruise Special Report

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### A big taste of JB

JOURNEY Beyond (JB) will this year be the presenting partner for the acclaimed food and wine festival, Tasting Australia.

The SA-based tour operator will team up with the festival, as announced this week by the state's Tourism Minister Zoe Bettison and JB's Justine Lally.

### Agents tick two HA islands



HAWAII Tourism Oceania and Hawaiian Airlines recently whisked a group of eight lucky travel advisors from Australia and New Zealand to explore two of the 'Islands of Aloha'.

Beginning with three nights at the Sheraton Waikiki Beach Resort, the group took a sunset cruise on the *Vida Mia*, a visit to Pearl Harbour, rode ATVs, and enjoyed dinner and a show at the Polynesian Cultural Centre.

After a short Hawaiian Airlines flight to Kauai, three more nights awaited at the Outrigger Kaua'i Beach Resort, where the group explored Waimea Canyon, a walking food tour in Hanapepe and a tour of Allerton Garden.

Pictured on their *Vida Mia* sunset cruise is the group, which included Belinda Brown, Envoyage; Billy Knepscheld, Flight Centre Sunshine Plaza; Jade Garlick, Roast & Roam itravel;

Natalya Colacicco, Flight Centre; Nathaniel Yuen, Flight Centre Sydney Airport; Siobhan Smith, Helloworld; Jay Crennell-Brown, Helloworld; Melanie Mitchell, Flight Centre; Anna Riedel, Hawai'i Tourism Oceania; and Denise Tomey, Hawaiian Airlines.

### Be an MSC insider

MSC Cruises is hosting a 20-minute webinar on Wed 04 Dec at 8.30am and 12.30pm AEST.

The session will cover last-minute sailings, the new 2025/26 Mediterranean and Northern Europe brochure, MSC Book's 10-year anniversary, and the 20% industry partner discount.

The session will be hosted by Bronwyn Knight, MSC Key Account Manager, who will also host a five-minute Q&A session.

To register for the session and for more details, [CLICK HERE](#).

### Globus portal date

GLOBUS family of brands is preparing travel advisors for the launch of its new globally integrated portal (**TD 09 Oct**), which is confirmed for Dec.

The upgraded Travel Advisor Portal (TAP) will go live next month, accompanied by training webinars on Wed.

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It's not just the views that are spectacular with Hurtigruten's Black Friday Sale. Get up to 50% off Hurtigruten cruises along Norway's famously picturesque coastline when you book before December 2, 2024 and you could witness the Northern Lights or the awe-inspiring Midnight Sun at a price that's just as amazing as the locals would say... 'Spektakulært'.

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## CORPORATE UPDATE

### Show business is booming

**BUSINESS** travel relating to the entertainment, sport and creative sector is booming, with in-person connections and international opportunities leading to a 41% year-on-year increase in bookings.

A market analysis by Flight Centre Travel Group subsidiary Stage and Screen determined the sector is working hard to connect with employees stationed around the world, with New Zealand and China competing for business.

The study canvassed the nine months from Jan-Sep 2023 versus 2024, finding hyper competition in the retail industry, despite the growth in online shopping, was driving travel bookings as businesses seek to conduct more face-to-face meetings.

On the back of Westpac's latest consumer sentiment report finding confidence is the highest it has been since 2022, many business owners in the retail industry are planning on growing their network in the coming year.

Stage and Screen found trips by those in retail averaged five days, and often incorporated a visit to a trade show, suggesting strategic scheduling to maximise ROI.

Feb was the most popular month to travel, after consumer sales peak, followed by booking spikes in Mar and May.

Sydney was the most popular destination to visit, followed by Melbourne, Brisbane, Perth, Adelaide and Canberra.

Internationally, New Zealand topped the list of preferred



destinations, followed by China, Hong Kong, the United Kingdom, Singapore and the United States.

Stage and Screen GM Adam Moon said it is crucial for retailers to stay ahead of emerging trends in their market.

"Attending buying trips and trade shows is essential for staying at the forefront of industry product developments and anticipating future trends.

"Additionally, in-person meetings and connections are important in the retail industry, regardless of economic conditions or their sales performance.

"Retailers are also saying yes to taking part in more trade shows and conferences, locally and overseas, with a recent survey showing this was the reason for 54 percent of Australian and New Zealand business travel." *ML*

### ETA won't stop UK

**CORPORATE** Traveller Global Managing Director, Tom Walley, says the looming introduction of the UK's new Electronic Travel Authorisation will not make a dent in demand for the country.

The ETA system (**TD 27 Nov**) is effective for Australians arriving into the UK from 08 Jan 2025.

### Discover our Adventure Special Report



### Rotty opens tender for accom



**ROTTNEST** Island will undergo major visitor upgrades in preparation for a bumper summer season, with late-night ferries now running.

The WA Government has opened tenders to deliver major Stay Rottneest accommodation enhancements for Longreach Bay and Fay's Bay self-contained units.

Tenders are also open to provide new worker accommodation on the island, with a \$98.5 million development to consist of around 150 new units to attract more staff and free up more accommodation for visitors.

Due for completion in mid-2025, the upgrades follow refurbishments at South Thomson and Geordie Bay, which saw the introduction of modernised kitchens and bathrooms, new furniture, fixtures and fittings, and improved outdoor amenities.

"Rottneest Island is an iconic tourism destination, visited by hundreds of thousands of visitors

and locals every year," Tourism Minister Rita Saffioti said.

"It's vital we continue to future-proof and plan for the island's growing popularity through investments in new worker accommodation." *JM*

### AA appoints four

**THE** Accommodation Australia (AA) Board has announced four new appointments to boost the peak industry body's nationwide representation.

Joining the Board are EVT Area GM, Joanna Carruthers; Marriott Area VP Australia, New Zealand & Pacific, Jason Nuell; Ovolo Group Chief Operating Officer, Wayne Taranto; and Crown Hotels & Resorts Executive GM Perth, Andrew Cairns.

The newcomers were welcomed at AA's Brisbane Board meeting last week, which covered a range of current and emerging policy issues affecting its members.

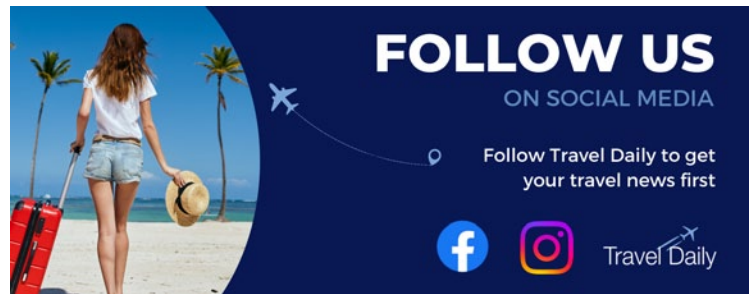
## Taking on tech: It's time to hit the dance floor

**OPINION** from eRoam  
General Manager, Paul Hole.



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and more in the Travel  
Tech Special Report.

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## SPECIALS

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**Virgin Australia** is going all out for Black Friday this year, discounting more than one-million seats as part of the annual sales blitz. One-way Economy Lite seats start from \$49 between Sydney and Ballina or Brisbane to Whitsundays from \$79, with some great return fares on int'l flights also available if booked by 04 Dec, for travel 06 Jan-18 Sep 2025.

Selected 2024 and 2025 departures with **Royal Caribbean** are available now, with up to \$1,000 off fares including buy one get one 60% off on sailings along the Queensland coast, or to the South Pacific and New Zealand. For example, a seven-night Queensland cruise on *Ovation of the Seas* is priced from \$1,899ppts - book by 11:59pm on 03 Dec.

Exclusive offers are now in market from **Scenic** for 2025 river cruises in Europe, with the 15-day 'Romantic Rhine and Moselle' itinerary priced from \$9,195ppts for a standard suite departing between Apr-Oct 2025. Great deals are also available on luxury expeditions with *Scenic Eclipse* and land journeys in Canada. Book by 08 Dec 2024.

**China Airlines** has launched a Black Friday promotion, offering airfares to Taiwan, London, Osaka and many more destinations starting from \$1,104 return departing from Sydney. **CLICK HERE** to find out more.

Activities retailer **Klook** is enticing travellers to South Korea with its Black Friday bonanza, taking up to 77% off some of the country's most popular attractions including Lotte World in Seoul. For those heading to the US, multi-day tickets to Disneyland Resort in Anaheim, which has opened more than 50 new or reimagined attractions since 2019, are also discounted by up to 15% as part of the promotion. On sale until 02 Dec.

Travellers heading to Dubai can enjoy 35% off a luxurious stay at **Atlantis The Palm** for bookings made by 04 Dec for stays until 22 Dec next year. Each night's stay includes unlimited access to The Lost Chambers aquarium and daily access to Aquaventure World, while kids aged up to 13 stay and eat for free.

**Virgin Voyages** is teasing its Insider 'lock it in rates' priced from \$149 per person per night on selected voyages. Bookings will also get a \$100 bar tab when booking selected cabin categories. There are eligible sailings in the Caribbean and Mediterranean across the fleet, which grows to four ships from late 2025 departing through late Oct.

With four hotels to choose from, **Accor** is inviting travellers to explore Sydney Olympic Park with its end-of-year offer of 20% off stays of two nights or more before 15 Jan 2025. Families of four can enjoy an overnight stay with complimentary breakfast and tickets to the Sydney Aquatic Centre starting from \$249 per room.

Plan your African safari with **South African Airways'** Black Fri special, with airfares from Perth to Jo'burg, Cape Town and Durban on sale from \$1,057 excluding taxes. For sale to 02 Dec and travel 20 Jan-31 May 2025.

## TIME sets sail for networking



**TIME** Queensland hosted its first cruise function yesterday on board Carnival Cruises' *Luminosa* at Brisbane's Int'l Cruise Terminal.

The networking event kicked off with a tour of the ship, followed by a three-course lunch in the dining room and an in-depth presentation about the latest updates on the TIME program.

Attendees heard from Mark Richards, Carnival's National Sales Manager, who emphasised the importance of having industry mentors, and showcased how guidance, support, and industry knowledge can accelerate professional development.

Zoe Gentle, recent TIME graduate and National Partnerships Manager at Europ Assistance, also shared her inspiring personal perspective on how the program has helped to navigate her career.

Rounding out the speakers for the day was Kim Tomlinson, National Business Development Manager at Travellers Choice, who offered insights about her

experience as a mentor for the TIME program, including sharing the benefits that come from guiding industry colleagues.

"I love the collaborative environment our Queensland networking events provide," said TIME Qld Committee member, Jacqui Tufala.

"The sharing of real personal experiences and insights provide attendees with a deeper understanding of how mentorship through TIME can make a real difference in shaping careers."

The TIME committee expressed thanks to Mark Richards and the Carnival team "for making this very successful event possible" and thanked those who took time on their weekend to participate.

For more information, visit the TIME website **HERE** or contact TIME Program Manager, Marie Allom via [time@travelindustrymentor.com.au](mailto:time@travelindustrymentor.com.au). *JM*

**Pictured:** Carnival staff member; Kim Tomlinson; Zoe Gentle; Mark Richards; Carnival staff member; and Jacqui Tufala. *JM*

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