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## Qantas rejigs Japan

**QANTAS** plans to swap its current daily flights operating from Brisbane and Melbourne to Narita to Haneda Airport instead, after securing the rights to a third daily frequency in each direction to Japan from the IASC.

The carrier still needs to be granted slots at Haneda for the move to happen, and subject to application approvals, tickets will go on sale towards the end of 2024 for a Mar 2025 start date.

Qantas currently operates four daily flights from Australia to Japan, with daily services from Brisbane and Melbourne to Narita, and double daily flights from Sydney to Haneda.

The added capacity has been awarded on a five-year term, which also extends to its budget subsidiary Jetstar.

## VA fills its “missing piece”

**THE** rumours swirling for months about Qatar Airways purchasing an equity stake in Virgin Australia have been vindicated this morning, with the Middle Eastern carrier confirming its intention to buy a 25% stake (**TD** breaking news).

Despite CEO Jayne Hrdlicka hosing down speculation of a purchase at CAPA last month, VA has announced parent company Bain Capital will seek to sell a quarter of its equity to QR, pending regulatory approvals.

VA said the acquisition will enable a “measured entry” into international flying from mid 2025, precipitating the launch of flights to Doha from Brisbane, Melbourne, Perth and Sydney.

These extra flights will open up more than 100 new connecting itineraries across Europe, the Middle East and Africa.

The proposed wet lease services will also allow VA to assess the longer-term merits and viability of using wide-body aircraft.

“This partnership brings the missing piece to Virgin Australia’s longer-term strategy and is a huge vote of confidence in Australian aviation,” Hrdlicka said.

“Our closer relationship allows us to dip our toe in the water regarding long-haul international flights...and loyalty programs,” she added.

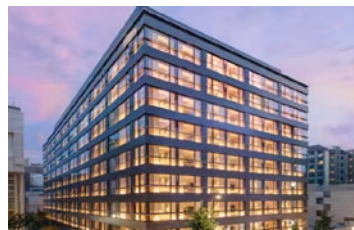
While some had speculated that if QR were to purchase a stake it might kill off any plans for VA to list on the ASX, VA said the minority stake would serve as a “cornerstone investment” ahead of an anticipated return of VA into public ownership. **AB**

## Hilton debuts Kyoto

**HILTON** Kyoto has opened its doors, marking the debut of the company’s flagship brand in the Japanese city.

The property features 313 rooms - most in the standard size of 40m<sup>2</sup> - as well as an all-day dining restaurant, a rooftop bar, an executive lounge, a spa, a fitness centre, and indoor pool.

Guests also have a choice of dining at four additional themed eateries, while event planners can book the large banquet hall and conference room.



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## A Titan of an offer

**IN CELEBRATION** of its first anniversary in Australia, Titan Travel is offering 25% off all tours.

Head to the **cover page** for all the details.

### Today's issue of TD

*Travel Daily* today features five pages of news including our **Sustainability** page, plus a cover page from **Titan Travel** and full pages from:

- Silversea
- Hong Kong Airlines

## Scot boosts flights

**SINGAPORE** Airlines’ budget carrier Scoot will boost frequencies to Melbourne and Perth from Dec.

Services to Perth will increase from 13 to 14 times weekly, while services to Melbourne will also rise from 12 to 13 times weekly, transitioning to twice daily from Jan 2025.

## Silversea savings

**SILVERSEA** is offering \$5,000 worth of savings per suite on select voyages, as well as reduced fares for second and third guests - see **page seven** to learn more.

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## itravel introduces Franchilli

TRAVEL agency network itravel has unveiled a new business model called Franchilli, which is designed to make it easier for members to transition from mobile to franchise operations.

Travel advisors seeking to scale up operations but are concerned about the cost factor involved are in the sweet spot for itravel's new model, with the company pledging Franchilli will take many of the complexities in the transition out of the equation.

itravel takes charge of the majority of overheads for advisors, including back office operations, marketing, social media, as well as website management, leaving its members to "turn up the heat" & focus on growing their business.

"We were hearing that mobile advisors were wanting to transition to a franchise store, but were hesitant about the complicated set up", itravel CEO

Steve Labroski said.

"At itravel, we are continuously innovating to provide solutions that meet our members' evolving needs, and Franchilli gives advisors a significant opportunity to scale their businesses with our support," he added.

Franchilli joins existing models such as mobile, hybrid mobile, franchise, LUXE, and Link Affiliate.

Find out more details about Franchilli by **CLICKING HERE**. AB

### Inspiring more Japan

TRAVEL agents can learn more about Inspiring Vacations' Japan tours with a new online session on Thu 03 Oct at 2pm (AEST).

Attendees will hear about the major selling points of specific Japan itineraries and the operator's Oct gift card incentive.

Advisors will go into the draw to win one of three \$50 gift cards.

To register, **CLICK HERE**.

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### Win \$1,000 a day

GLOBAL family of brands (GFOB) is giving agents in Australia and New Zealand the chance to win \$1,000 per day when they make a deposited booking with Globus, Cosmos and Avalon Waterways for departures in 2025.

The '\$1k a Day Giveaway' kicked off yesterday, and will run until 30 Nov, with one agent selected via a daily draw to win a \$1,000 Visa gift card.

The more bookings an agent makes, the more chances they have to win, with no limitations on the number of times an individual can score the daily prize.

Winners will be notified directly by GFOB each day, including weekends, via call, voicemail and/or email, and gift cards will be distributed weekly (electronically or in-person).

The promotion is not applicable to group bookings.

For more information on the giveaway, contact [sales@globusfamily.com.au](mailto:sales@globusfamily.com.au).

### Running out of Jucy



CAMPERVAN company Jucy Group has rebranded to Travvia, with the new name designed to reflect the acquisition of Star RV in 2022 and future growth prospects (TD 14 Dec 2022).

The new branding was inspired by the words 'travel' and 'via' (Latin for 'road'), and intends to communicate the spirit of adventure, travel, and life-changing experiences to clients.

"The strong revival of int'l inbound into Australia and New Zealand will allow us to diversify our market and tap into the return of the European and North American markets who are seeking experiences," Travvia Chief Executive Dan Alpe said.

"Our goal is to appeal to a wider global audience... and the company has evolved dramatically since we first launched Jucy twenty years ago."

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## NRMA camps out for kids



NRMA Parks and Resorts is inviting the public to camp out in support of national children's cancer charity, Camp Quality.

On Sat 26 Oct, travellers can participate in the Camp Out campaign at any of NRMA's more than 40 holiday parks across the eastern states.

Half of the fees from unpowered, powered, and ensuite caravan and campsite stays that night will go to Camp Quality's Family Getaway program, which gives those affected by cancer a much-needed break and opportunity to create happy memories.

Campers who book a stay at any NRMA holiday park or resort for the weekend of 26 Oct will be treated to a family-friendly barbecue, fun activities and a night of entertainment before sleeping under the stars.

Each park will also have its own webpage to promote donations and a friendly competition to be the winning park.

Supporters can book their Camp Out stay [HERE](#), or make a donation [HERE](#). JM

## Great dining in NZ

GREAT Journeys New Zealand has formally introduced its premium dining experience to the Northern Explorer scenic train journey between Auckland and Wellington, as part of its Scenic Plus service.

Guests can enjoy local food sourced in line with Great Journeys NZ's 'paddock-to plate' philosophy and commitment to celebrating authentic local flavours, while taking in North Island landscapes, experiences and stories along the route.

The service launched earlier this year on the TranzAlpine scenic train between Christchurch and Greymouth, followed by the Coastal Pacific service between Picton and Christchurch.

## Qantas in American skies

QANTAS is bringing the Aussie spirit to North America with its new brand campaign, 'Australia in the Sky', which launches as the carrier celebrates 70 years of flying to the United States.

The Flying Kangaroo tapped widely-acclaimed writer, producer and director Baz Luhrmann and Academy Award-winning costume and production designer Catherine Martin to act as creative consultants and ambassadors for the campaign.

It also recruited several famous Aussie faces, including actor Charlee Fraser and model Jess Hart, to star alongside the Qantas crew, while Melbourne-born movie star Chris Hemsworth lent his voice to the campaign.

Filmed at Qantas' Los Angeles hangar on board an A380 aircraft, the marketing collateral showcases iconic locations around Australia including Bondi Beach, Sydney Harbour, Melbourne's Federation Square, and the Great Barrier Reef.

The campaign is soundtracked by Australian duo Angus and Julia Stone and features a wardrobe of Australian designers.

"It's easier than ever for US travellers to take a break in

Australia, with the majority of our services connecting the two countries in a single hop," said Qantas Group Chief Marketing Officer, Petra Perry.

See the 'Australia in the Sky' campaign video [HERE](#). JM

## Windstar grows 2026

WINDSTAR Cruises has expanded its itineraries in the South Pacific with new experiences visiting Fiji, Tonga and the Cook Islands, on top of existing sailings in Tahiti and the Society Islands, the Tuamotus, and the Marquesas.

New offerings include the 15-day 'Flowers of the South French Polynesia' and the 10- or 11-day 'Maori Storytellers & French Polynesian Treasures' sailings.

The luxury small ship cruise line has also added new shorter itinerary options like the seven-night Tuamotus cruise and 11-night Marquesas cruise, as well as air and hotel packages with overwater bungalows in Bora Bora.

Travellers who book a 2026 South Pacific cruise before 31 Oct 2024 will enjoy a complimentary all-Inclusive experience (worth \$142/day per guest) featuring wi-fi, unlimited wine, beer and cocktails, all gratuities, plus \$100 in credit per stateroom.



## Czech airline closes

THE flag carrier of Czech Republic will be absorbed by fellow Czech airline Smartwings on 28 Oct, ending more than 100 years of operations.

Czech Airlines has struggled to deliver profits in recent years in the wake of competition from an increasing number of budget carriers and the hangover effect from the pandemic.

Currently, the soon-to-be-defunct airline operates two routes to Paris and Madrid from Prague Vaclav Havel Airport, using two Airbus A320-200 aircraft.

Czech Airlines' frequent flyer programs, OK Plus and OK Plus Corporate, will also be terminated after its amalgamation.

## HX discounted fares

HONG Kong Airlines has announced special airfares to celebrate the resumption of its seasonal Gold Coast to Hong Kong service, which takes off on 17 Jan 2025.

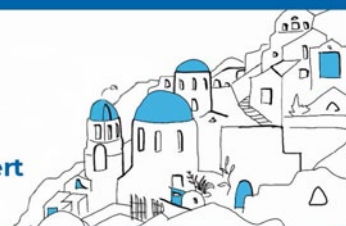
Travellers can nab an economy class seat from \$792, or luxurious business class with fares priced from \$3,841.

See the [back page](#).

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## Charme's grand Oz plans

**ITALIAN** ultra-luxe itinerary designers Charme and Adventure has identified Australia as a key growth opportunity, targeting both the high and ultra-high net worth markets.

The Milan-based company, which has been operating for around 15 years, has appointed Anthony Knox & Associates as its Australian GSA and market rep.

Speaking to **TD**, Anthony Knox said Charme and Adventure is keen to work with luxury specialist travel agents in Australia, offering exclusive products capable of generating high commissions.

The company specialises in fully personalised itineraries and products such as discreet villas, private jets, helicopters, luxury cars and superyacht rentals.

Clients can also access products to suit particular interests such as archeology, coupled with food and wine experiences, such as an exclusive meal at a Tuscan castle or a Michelin-starred restaurant



in Venice or the Amalfi Coast.

"I'll be trying to target the major players, people like American Express Centurion, Virtuoso travel agents all over Australia and consortia like TravelManagers and MTA Travel," Knox said.

As custodians of exclusive high-end product, Knox said Charme and Adventure pay commissions of 10-12%, but can increase to 15% or more depending on specific booking inclusions. **ML**

### Kingfisher lights it up

**KINGFISHER** Bay Resort on K'Gari (formerly Fraser Island) debuted its new light show last night, showcasing the island's natural beauty in a symphony of light, sound and colour.

Taking place year-round within the grounds of the resort, Illumina aims to "mesmerise audiences with vibrant displays and intricate patterns cast on to a natural canvas and filling the sky, celebrating the island's World Heritage-listed landscapes".

Kingfisher Bay Resort is offering accommodation packages with exclusive light show access, gourmet dining options, full-day 4WD tours, and eco-friendly accommodation - more **HERE**.

### DL inks Travelport

**TRAVELPORT** has signed a multi-year renewal agreement with Delta Air Lines, including for NDC content.

To help travel agencies solve challenges with comparing NDC offers alongside traditional content, Travelport has also debuted its Content Curation Layer, which uses AI to sift through aggregated, multi-source content to return a list of intuitive search results.

### Win a luxury cruise

**CRUISEHQ** has launched a new 'Celebrating Europe' campaign running from 01 Oct to 31 Dec, giving agents the chance to win a bucket list luxury Ponant sailing in the Kimberley.

Advisors who book with CruiseHQ during the campaign period will be eligible to win, with the incentive also offering bonus commission for every booking made for MSC Cruises.

The third pillar of the promotion will reward agents \$100 or \$50 gift cards for every deposited booking made.

"By collaborating closely with our trusted cruise line suppliers, we're able to offer exclusive packages with incredible value and experiences," CruiseHQ General Manager, Caroline Hitchen, said.

**CLICK HERE** to read the full terms and conditions, and **HERE** for the promo landing page.

### A Star "on its knees"

**STAR** Entertainment will cut 300 jobs, cancel annual bonuses, and jettison \$300 million in assets to save the business its CEO described as "on its knees".

The major shake-up of costings follows the company last week posting a \$1.7 billion loss for the 12 months to 30 Jun.

Accounts released by the entertainment business show a 10% decrease in revenue to \$1.7 billion, while earnings have also dropped through the floor by 45% to \$175 million.

### Subsidies extended

**THE** NSW Government has decided to continue a \$2 million subsidy scheme for commercial flights in western NSW, which has been extended through to at least Nov 2025.

The latest deal takes the financial burden off flights from Dubbo to Bourke, Walgett and Lightning Ridge operated by Air Link and from Sydney to Cobar operated by FlyPelican.

"For Sydneysiders, air travel is an easily accessible convenience but for people living in western NSW, it is not so easy," NSW Minister for Regional NSW and western NSW, Tara Moriarty, said.

"This funding will help commercial operators offer a two-way service connecting regional NSW with essential workers, trades, and services they often depend on," she added.



### QLD airports sold

**AMERICAN** private equity giant Kohlberg Kravis Roberts & Co (KKR) and Skip Capital have purchased a 74% controlling stake in Queensland Airports, which owns Gold Coast, Townsville, Longreach and Mt Isa airports.

According to *The Australian Financial Review*, the QAL stake worth \$1.5 billion represents the maiden airport investment for KKR in its US\$550 billion portfolio.



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### IATA Matchmaker

**THE** International Air Transport Association (IATA) has announced a SAF Matchmaker platform for airlines and sustainable aviation fuel suppliers.

The development was announced at the recent World Sustainability Symposium in Miami, with an expected launch anticipated in the first quarter of 2025.

SAF producers and suppliers will be able to post available or planned SAF volumes, and airlines will be able to register their interest in purchasing shown or desired SAF volumes.

Any trades will take place outside the platform.

The Matchmaker will also carry comprehensive information on the SAF available, such as volumes, feedstock used, the location, the technology of production, the emissions reductions, as well as compliance with certain carbon schemes.

“Our vision is to create a transparent, efficient, and accessible matchmaking platform that will accelerate the uptake of SAF as the aviation industry progresses towards net zero CO2 emissions by 2050,” Senior Vice President Sustainability & Chief Economist Marie Owens Thomsen said.

## KELSIAN HOPS ON HYDROGEN BUSES

**KELSIAN'S** enhanced bus solutions was one of the highlights of its 2023-2024 *Sustainability Report*, as the company reduces its emissions and supports global decarbonisation efforts.

The year saw Kelsian commence trials of four hydrogen fuel cell buses (HFCBs) in South Australia and Victoria, which joined the company's fleet of 149 battery-powered units.

Kelsian said the HFCBs are a “pioneering” development.

“This trial sets the benchmark for exploring hydrogen bus transportation solutions in Australia,” Kelsian said.

“These hydrogen buses utilise cutting-edge fuel cells that combine hydrogen with oxygen to produce electricity.”



The company plans to expand its fleet to almost 400 battery buses over the next two years.

Kelsian's SeaLink Tourism is also actively working to reduce plastic waste in Sydney Harbour with its Captain Cook Cruises brand.

The company has deployed Seabin technology, which uses a water pump to draw in

contaminated water and capture debris, before releasing clean water back into the Harbour.

The Seabin tech, which was installed in 2023, has filtered 240 million litres of water, capturing 325 kilograms of marine litter.

It also captured more than 53,000 plastic items and more than 20,000 microplastics. *MS*

### What to expect when you're XPENG

**SYDNEY** Airport will welcome smart electric vehicle manufacturer XPENG to its domestic airport precinct later this year, in an Aussie-first.

The showroom will be the first in the country, and will be located at the entry of the domestic precinct.

The 3,000m<sup>2</sup> showroom will allow customers to test drive vehicles from XPENG's extensive range, as well as explore the brand's cutting-edge technology.

The showroom will open in

Nov, at the corner of Reginald Ansett Drive & Joyce.

“We are excited to welcome XPENG to Sydney Airport in an Australian first and take pride in their choice of our gateway to Australia as the location for their largest sales hub and experience centre,” Sydney Airport Group Executive Commercial Mark Zaouk said.

“With over 40 million passengers passing through Sydney Airport each year, we stand out among major airports globally,” he added.

### Preferred plan

**PREFERRED** Travel Group has unveiled its company-wide climate action plan, which aims to “make travel a force for good through climate action”.

The plan has been created in partnership with the Travel Foundation, and builds on the organisation's signing of the Glasgow Declaration on Climate Action in Tourism.

Preferred aims to integrate climate action its broader metrics for measuring business success.

## Discover our Adventure Special Report

## For a bloody good cause



**CELESTYAL** is set to back two charity events this year as part of its commitment to the local communities visited by its ships. The cruise line has announced the 2024 Celestyal blood donation campaign, in partnership with the Metaxa Hospital of Piraeus, which will be held on *Celestyal Journey* on 21 Sep.

Established in 2016, the program

is supported by Celestyal's head office employees and crew members twice a year to aid medical emergencies and urgent blood needs in the local healthcare system.

The cruise line also welcomes volunteers from outside the business to participate, including locals and sailing guests, by visiting one of the public hospitals and donating under the Celestyal Blood Bank banner.

So far, Celestyal has donated a total of 166 units of blood, with 44 units used for medical emergencies involving colleagues, their families, and locals in Greece.

Additionally, the cruise line will help fight breast cancer by participating in the 16th Greece Race for the Cure, which takes place 28-29 Sep in Athens.

Celestyal's head office team is joining the event alongside their international colleagues participating in parallel races across the globe to raise funds in support of programs that aid women who are battling cancer.

The company will also award the first-place finisher a gift voucher for a four-night voyage for two about the luxurious *Celestyal Discovery*. JM

## Accor Plus turns 30

**SUBSCRIPTION** loyalty program Accor Plus is celebrating its 30th birthday, marking the occasion by launching a 30% price cut on new memberships for a limited time.

Membership unlocks discounts of up to 50% on dining and stays at more than 1,000 Accor hotels plus a range of exclusive perks.

Accor Plus CEO Renae Trimble said the program that began in 1994 with three hotels has come a long way, now operating in 10 Asian and Pacific countries and covering 23 Accor hotel brands.

"This milestone is a testament to [our members'] loyalty, as well as the dedication of our incredible hotel teams, General Managers, and owners across Asia Pacific," Trimble said.

## MONEY

**WELCOME** to Money, TD's Tue feature on what the Australian dollar is doing.

### AU\$1 = US\$0.692

**THE** Aussie dollar ended Sep on a higher note, posting gains of over 0.22% against the US dollar - an upswing triggered by China's announcement of economic stimulus measures.

Additionally, the RBA revealed it will keep its interest rate at 4.35% per annum.

*Wholesale rates this morning.*

US	\$0.692
UK	£0.517
NZ	\$1.089
Euro	€0.621
Japan	¥99.32
Thailand	฿22.41
China	¥4.853
South Africa	11.96
Canada	\$0.935
Crude oil	US\$69.37

## Ecuador warnings

**TRAVELLERS** in Ecuador are being advised of electricity and water shortages, including planned outages, due to forest fires affecting some regions, including Quinto.

Meanwhile, a separate state of emergency is in effect in the provinces of El Oro, Guayas, Los Rios, Manabi, Orellana, Santa Elena, and the Ponce Enriquez County in Azuay, with curfews in place in some districts.

DFAT has suggested that visitors monitor local media and check for updates from local authorities, and has warned the situation may change at short notice.

## Window Seat

**PORING** over the details of what went wrong at Rex Airlines has revealed some rather overbearing behaviour allegedly perpetuated by former CEO, Lim Kim Hai.

According to insiders who spoke with *Four Corners*, Kim was known to deliver what staff labelled 'Lim bombs', a term employees used to describe emails that provided pointed feedback.

Former General Manager of Safety and Compliance, Russell Higgins, told the ABC program that he once received an email from Lim reminding him to use black and white printing instead of using more expensive colour cartridges.

"He liked to send messages to staff that made them aware he knew about everything that's going on," Higgins said.

"[His] management style was, I would say...autocratic, and I think he believed that he knew more than anyone."

To Lim's credit, he didn't shy away from being described as a micromanager who was, at times, rude and unhinged.

"I tend to agree to all the adjectives," he conceded.

"The reason why I managed to be successful is because some of these so-called unhinged decisions are decisions that most people wouldn't make.

"Rex had an impeccable record, both in terms of its operations and in terms of its financial capability," he added.



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