

Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today features five pages of news, including our **Corporate Update**, and a full page from **APT**.

QR local chief exits?

QATAR Airways' Country Manager for Australia Wayne Borland appears to have wrapped up his role with the carrier.

According to Borland's LinkedIn profile, he exited the airline last month after taking on the top job in Dec 2023 (**TD** 08 Dec 2023).

The change in Borland's LinkedIn status coincides with a job ad recently posted by Qatar Airways seeking a new Country Manager for Australia East.

Interestingly, the job ad now states the carrier is "no longer accepting applications".

When contacted for confirmation, Qatar's PR representative Seven Communications said there were currently no updates to share.

AAA urges airport funding

THE Australian Airports Association (AAA) is urging the Federal Government to commit to \$50 million funding a year for regional and rural airports, as part of its federal election asks.

The call for greater support comes after the aviation body's bi-annual Division Meetings, where it heard from members around the country about their need for improved sustainable funding to ensure their infrastructure is "up to scratch".

"Many of these local airports are council-run and often operate at a loss, so to plan for the future they need stronger funding commitments," AAA CEO Simon Westaway said.

"AAA would like to see an ongoing pledge of \$50 million a year for the Regional Airports and Remote Airstrip Upgrade Programs to help close the infrastructure gap in our smaller gateways across Australia.

"Without adequate investment, outdated and strained airport infrastructure will impede economic growth and hinder the travel industry."

Westaway emphasised the importance of regional airports' role in connecting residents to essential services, family and friends, and tourism opportunities, pointing out that 15% of Australian passengers transit through these hubs.

"With the ongoing uncertainty around Rex Airlines, support for the sustainable continuation of regional airlines is also crucial as they are the lifeline for access to healthcare, education, business, and social connections," he added.

The AAA is also calling on the Federal Government to cover Australia's mid-sized airports with a \$25 million funding program, to ensure they can "better plan and co-participate in essential safety upgrades". *JM*

ACCC on VA glitch

VIRGIN Australia has reported to the ACCC about issues the airline self-identified regarding customers being overcharged for itinerary changes (**TD** 10 Apr).

The consumer watchdog told **Travel Daily** it is working with Virgin Australia on the matter, and assessing whether the remedial actions the carrier is taking are suitable.

California dropping

CALIFORNIA is beginning to feel the impacts of new political and economic headwinds in the US, with its international visitor numbers falling for the first time since the height of the pandemic, Visit California President & CEO Caroline Beteta has revealed.

The state saw a year-on-year decline of 8.8% in Feb, with the Canadian market particularly affected due to political concerns, reports of border detentions, and a weak Canadian dollar.



See website for T&Cs


VIKING

Discover More
FOR LESS

*For a limited time save up
to 30% on selected river
and ocean voyages.
Book by 30 June 2025*.*

To book call 138 747 or book online at
viking.com/travel-advisor

CLICK HERE

HLO Mega Stars is back

THE wholesale division of Helloworld Travel has announced its 2025 Global Stars reward program, which will see it whisk away top-selling Australian and New Zealand agents to Vietnam.

With dates now confirmed to be 08-13 Sep 2025, the incentive will see the return of Mega Stars, in which HLO's top 10 Global Stars are rewarded with an "extra special" program of experiences during the five days.

The full program this year consists of three itineraries, with Global Stars Hanoi, Global Stars Ho Chi Minh City and the Mega Stars groups each enjoying a bespoke program.

The groups will then join up in Hoi An for more activities and the annual Global Stars Gala Dinner.

"The re-introduction of Mega Stars is exciting for the Global Stars program for 2025," said Cinzia Burnes, HLO COO and Executive Director.

"This is for the very top tier of excellence for our wholesale brands, VIVA Holidays and ReadyRooms, with our top agents given even more special and



exclusive activities on offer just for them."

Burnes also acknowledged the support provided by newly appointed local destination management company, Vivu Journeys, a part of TMG.

"We know how important an excellent DMC partnership is, and we are delighted to partner with TMG, a leader in the region.

"They are the experts, and we will be well-rewarded by their knowledge and service on the ground," Burnes added.

Last year's Global Stars famill took place in Southern California, co-hosted by United Airlines, Cover-More Travel, Intrepid and Disneyland (**TD** 21 Nov 2024). *JM*

PRICES FROM \$4,199
PER PERSON TWIN SHARE
LAND ONLY
"Surcharges may apply"

Authentic Vietnam

WWT TOURS

DURATION: 15 DAYS

VIEW DEAL

Sell and see Japan

WENDY Wu Tours has launched a new incentive for Australian travel agents, offering a spot on an all-inclusive cherry blossom tour to Japan departing in 2026.

The new 'Sell Japan to See Japan' promotion runs through to 31 May and also includes supplementary prizes of \$200 gift vouchers to five runners-up.

Advisors will earn one point for every person booked and deposited on any Japan tour, with an extra point for tours departing during cherry blossom season.

The agent with the most points at the end of the incentive wins, with gross sales value acting as a tie-breaker if necessary.

For full details on the incentive, agents are invited to speak to their Wendy Wu Tours BDM or visit the company's agent portal.

Explore the eligible tours **HERE**.

APT lights up Brissy

APT Travel Group hosted its final VIP Awards Dinner in Brisbane recently, celebrating its top Queensland agents.

Discover who the winners were by checking out **page six**.



Disneyland 70
RESORT CALIFORNIA

AUSTRALIA & NEW ZEALAND RESIDENT TICKET OFFER

On sale now through your preferred wholesaler!

Valid on all 3-, 4-, and 5-Day Theme Park Tickets.
For travel between 16 May 2025 and 9 October 2026.

Theme Park Reservations are required and are subject to availability. ©2025 Disney

Business Development Manager – VIC Based

We are on the lookout for our next BDM superstar to be based in Victoria.

If you are an experienced BDM and looking for variety in the product you represent whilst using your passion for building professional business relationships come and join our small close-knit representation team.

Full Time or Part Time considered for the right candidate.

Reach out Pete Rawley or Ingrid Berthelsen
info@evolutiontc.com.au or read more at
evolutiontc.com.au/work-with-us



Evolution Travel Collective

COME SHARE OUR LOVE OF A TRULY FANTASTIC NEW YEAR

New Year in an Italian Castle 7 days

WINNER
TWO YEARS IN A ROW
2023 & 2024
Most Outstanding
Tour Operator Specialised

CLICK HERE FOR AWARD-WINNING TOURS!

ALBATROSS TOURS
Come share our love of Europe

Wendy Wu Tours

2026 & 2027

CHERRY BLOSSOM

EARLY BIRD SALE | SAVE \$1,000PP

AUSTRALIA'S #1 JAPAN TOUR OPERATOR



Daily Japan departures



Fully-inclusive tours



Tours for everyone



Travel with the experts



Dedicated solo departures



SHARPEN YOUR KNOWLEDGE ON TAIWAN & EVA AIR

Travel Daily Training Academy



Taiwan 30 YEARS OF PEACE

Click here to discover

QF Airbus sustain

QANTAS and Airbus will jointly invest \$15 million in Climate Tech Partners (CTP), a collaborative venture capital fund designed to support ongoing development of sustainable aviation fuel (SAF).

The new investment will be targeted at stimulating SAF technological advancements in Australia, focusing on feedstock development and other value-chain innovations.

Funds will be used to help CTP address concerns raised by Qantas and Airbus on early stage climate technologies and scaling SAF for commercial production.

Qantas Chief Sustainability Officer Fiona Messent said the partnership will provide a vote of confidence in new technologies so they can evolve and develop.

The investment forms part of a broader \$200 million partnership formed between the two organisations (**TD** 11 Nov 2022) designed to fast-track SAF production and development.

SA's simple pleasures

SOUTH Australia has launched a new brand platform and international tourism campaign, in collaboration with Adelaide-based agency, Frame Creative.

Highlighting the state's coastal and wine regions, the 'Simple Pleasures' campaign uses a mix of film, animation and illustration to encourage travellers to cherish and recognise the moments that make life meaningful.

Starring in the new creative are a number of local talents including musicians, artists and actors such as Hugh Sheridan and Tilda Cobham-Hervey, who both lend their voice in the promotion.

The new campaign will hit TV screens as a three-episode series, beginning in the lead-up to the AFL's Gather Round in Adelaide.

"This brand platform is about celebrating our South Australian way of life and inviting the rest of the world to come and enjoy it," said South Australian Tourism Commission CEO, Emma Terry.

Sport travel an open goal

SPORTS and major events are changing how people travel and presents a major opportunity for the industry, particularly around women's sports, a study from Expedia Group has found.

According to the OTA, sports tourism now represents 10% of global travel spend and is on track to hit US\$1.3 trillion by 2032, with next year's FIFA World Cup fuelling planning momentum.

Expedia's study was conducted by Censuswide and surveyed a sample of 2,000 respondents who travelled for a sporting event.

It found 44% of sports fans travel internationally to see their favourite teams play, with the average sports trip spend exceeding US\$1,500pp.

Further, three in every five fans booked accommodation outside their event's host city at some point in their trip, propping up regional and nearby economies.

More than 80% of sports fans



extended their trip to visit nearby destinations, with 30% exploring more of the host country and 21% going further abroad.

While men's sports continued to dominate, women's sports have seen explosive growth, with more younger travellers attending mixed-gender sporting events.

Attendees spent an average of US\$300 on event tickets, with airfares averaging US\$420 and \$480 per night on a hotel.

"Fans are creating rich travel itineraries around sporting events, exploring multiple destinations, prioritising experiences with loved ones, and taking time for activities beyond the stadium," Expedia Group CCO Greg Schulze said. *ML*

 AGENT INCENTIVE

 Wendy Wu Tours

SELL JAPAN TO SEE JAPAN

WIN a trip to Japan during the
2026 Cherry Blossom Season

FIND OUT MORE

Every agent who
books goes in the
draw to win 1
of 5 \$200 gift
vouchers!

CORPORATE UPDATE

Expenses powered by AI

A NEW AI-powered corporate travel and expense management platform has launched, aimed at providing an end-to-end solution and new automated tools.

The new AirBooking.com tool from AirRetailer Travel Technology integrates automatically with IATA Financial Gateway (IFG), allowing businesses to optimise travel and expense processes to drive cost savings, policy compliance and simplify traveller experiences.

The new solution studies past behaviour to suggest the best available travel options while aligning with company policy and travel preferences.

An inbuilt dynamic pricing

engine offers real-time pricing adjustments to ensure businesses always get the best value.

The system is connected to NDC fare options to ensure real-time seat availability and personalised offers across both full-service airlines and low-cost carriers.

Users can also use AI to predict future fares to ensure last-minute bookings still align with policy.

AirBooking.com automatically categorises and processes travel expenses, reducing manual work and improving accuracy.

The partnership and integration with IATA enables multi-currency support and currency exchange capabilities along with automatic expense reconciliation.

If anything goes wrong during a trip, the new tool is backed up by a 24/7 assistance team. *ML*

FCM now in S.Africa

FCM Meetings & Events has launched in South Africa, marking the global company's latest strategic move to expand into high-growth MICE markets.

"South African businesses are looking for scalable, intelligent solutions that help them drive a real measurable return on investment from their meetings and events programs," said Mummy Mafojane, General Manager, FCM South Africa.

"With this launch, FCM Meetings & Events brings world-class planning expertise, innovative digital tools and sustainable practices to South African businesses, empowering them to manage every element of their meeting portfolios better."

CX raises the bar

CATHAY Pacific is set to become one of the very few airlines to offer both 100% seatback inflight entertainment and 100% high-speed inflight wi-fi connectivity across its fleet.

From Aug 2025, all customers travelling on Cathay Pacific flights will be able to enjoy the carrier's state-of-the-art inflight entertainment system, which features 4K ultra-high-definition screens, as well as high-speed Wi-Fi in every cabin on every route.

Additionally, first and business class pax can access complimentary wi-fi services.

Travel Daily

SHARPEN YOUR KNOWLEDGE ON TOKYO WITH TRAVEL DAILY TRAINING ACADEMY

Click here to discover



A return to New York's jazz era



TO CELEBRATE the 100th anniversary of *The Great Gatsby* on Wed evening, I Love NY, Linkd Tourism and Delta Air Lines hosted a lavish soiree at Marble Bar in Sydney, reminiscent of speakeasies during the jazz era.

On the night, guests enjoyed live music, locally-inspired canapes, free-flowing wine from New York State's Finger Lakes Region and New York Orchard Martinis, inspired by the state's apple orchards.

"It was an honour to represent Delta Air Lines at such a spectacular celebration of *The Great Gatsby's* 100-year legacy," said Jacqui Walshe, CEO and Managing Director, The Walshe Group, Delta's GSA in Australia and New Zealand.

"Delta's journey from a small crop-dusting company to the world's leading global airline

mirrors the spirit of innovation and resilience that defines *The Great Gatsby*."

Lovers of the iconic novel and visitors to New York have the opportunity to book guided tours, revealing the glamorous locations that inspired Fitzgerald's famous work, including Ohoka Castle, The Plaza Hotel, Great Neck, Sands Point Preserve, Hampstead House, Flushing Meadows-Corona Park and more.

Guests can also join Prohibition food and drink tours that uncover the speakeasies where flappers and bootleggers once gathered during the jazz era.

"Long Island's mansions and the city's hidden speakeasies capture the essence of *The Great Gatsby*, a timeless New York State love story that travellers can still experience today," said Michael Cassis from Linkd Tourism. *JHM*



Long-stay specialists

Simplify your corporate travel needs

A partner you can rely on, and apartments they'll love. The solution is here.

✉ info@astraapartments.com.au
 🌐 astraapartments.com.au



7+ nights? Easy →

AUSTRALIA

Sydney • Melbourne • Brisbane • Canberra • Perth • Wollongong • Newcastle

NEW ZEALAND

Auckland

SPECIALS

Send your special deals to:
specials@traveldaily.com.au

APT Travel Group is offering up to 30% off its 2025 outback adventures, including coastal cruises and 4WD journeys across Australia. Destinations include the Kimberley, Queensland, Northern Territory, WA, and SA. The sale ends 23 Apr - find out more [HERE](#).

Travellers can save up to \$7,000, plus enjoy a \$500 shipboard credit per suite, on most **Silversea** voyages departing through 2027. Guests must reserve a suite by 31 May 2025 with a 15% deposit to secure the offer. For example, clients can enjoy savings on a seven-day Mediterranean voyage aboard *Silver Muse* departing 12 Aug 2025. [CLICK HERE](#) for more details.

Until the end of Apr, **Accor** is inviting travellers to transfer their loyalty points from NAB Rewards, Virgin Money Rewards or pay.com.au to ALL - Accor Live Limitless and get a 30% bonus ALL Reward points. Points can be redeemed for hotel getaways, events, and more. See [HERE](#).

Murray River Paddlesteamers has announced savings of up to 15% on four summer sailings aboard the new *PS Australian Star* in Jan 2026, with the bonus of a bar credit on selected journeys. The offers are for bookings made by 30 Jun 2025 - call 03 5482 5244 for more information.


Adventure seekers can relish **AAT Kings'** latest deals, which offer discounts on select tours departing between May and Jul. For example, travellers can save \$1,357 on 'Untamed Kimberley', an 11-day journey into the heart of WA. Guests will discover dramatic gorges, ancient rock art, and majestic waterfalls while connecting with the region's rich culture. Discounts are subject to availability - find out more [HERE](#).

Air New Zealand has launched its latest sale, offering cheaper airfares for Aussies travelling to the US. Return fares start from \$1,251 from Melbourne to LA, while travellers can also fly from Sydney to Honolulu from \$1,312 and Adelaide to Vancouver from \$2,201. The sale runs across all cabins until 16 Apr, unless sold out earlier - [CLICK HERE](#).

Clients who are looking to book an international holiday in Sep can take advantage of **Trafalgar's** new sale, which offers savings of up to \$2,226 per couple on select global trips. For example, the 12-day 'Wonders of Britain and Ireland' has been reduced from \$6,495 to \$5,521, while the 17-day 'New Zealand Uncovered' is now \$10,017, priced down from \$11,130. Explore the sale [HERE](#).

Dorsett Melbourne has launched a new package with a two-night stay for two guests, starting from \$359. The offer includes daily buffet breakfast for two in Port Bistro; a nightly drink and 15% off at Jin Bar; complimentary valet parking (must be pre-booked); and complimentary late check-out at 1pm. The 'Melbourne Moments' Package is available for stays until 21 Sep 2025, for bookings made by 30 Apr - info [HERE](#).




Cruise lovers can save up to \$12,200 per couple on **Viking's** 'Jewels of Japan & China' voyage [HERE](#), for select Oct to Nov 2025 departures.



Stay Updated

on the latest travel news

Follow Travel Daily on social media to get your travel news first

Universal park coming to UK



GREAT Britain will become the home of the first Universal theme park in the UK and Europe, with Comcast NBCUniversal agreeing a multi-million pound investment with the UK Government.

Subject to planning approval, the complex (**pictured**) will sit across 476 acres and include several themed lands featuring Universal characters and entertainment franchises.

The park will offer a range of rides, attractions and entertainment, plus a 500-room hotel and nearby dining complex.

Slated to open in 2031, the park is estimated to bring a £50 billion (A\$105 billion) economic boost to the UK and create around 28,000 jobs across creative, infrastructure and hospitality.

The new park will be located in Bedford, around a 90-minute drive north of London, and is set to become one of the largest and most advanced in Europe.

Universal says it is expecting up to 8.5 million visitors to the new park in its first year, with UK Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer

saying a planning proposal is expected soon, with construction tipped to begin next year.

"It is not just about numbers; it's about securing real opportunities for people in our country," Sir Starmer said.

"Together, we are building a brighter future for the UK, getting people into work and ensuring our economy remains strong and competitive," he added. *ML*

Back joins Mulpha

AUSTRALIAN events company Mulpha Events has appointed Clare Back as General Manager - Events & Partnerships, effective 28 Apr 2025, following the departure of long-term leader Johan Hassar (*TD* 23 Jan).

Back brings more than 20 years' of events experience spanning food and wine, motorsport and fashion, including GM of Marketing and Experience at the Formula 1 Australian Grand Prix.

Mulpha Events is the owner-operator of the Sanctuary Cove International Boat Show.



APT
TRAVEL
GROUP

QUEENSLAND AGENTS LIGHT UP THE NIGHT AT FINAL VIP CELEBRATION

APT Travel Group's final VIP Awards Dinner of the season was held in Brisbane at the stunning Blackbird Bar and Grill. Despite a delay caused by Cyclone Alfred, the event proved well worth the wait. Queensland agents brought unbeatable energy to the night, with plenty of dancing and celebration. Guests were inspired by a presentation from APT's Scott Ellis and Rob McGeary, rounding out an evening filled with appreciation and recognition. Queensland once again showcased its strength, securing two McGeary Club Awards and three Million Dollar Agent honours. Global Journeys emerged as the big winner, taking home three major awards. It was the perfect finale to an unforgettable season of celebrations.



Our Vacation Centre
being awarded McGeary Club 2025



Diamond agency Flight Centre Bundaberg
received the QLD Outstanding Sales
Achievement award for 2024



Diamond and Platinum agents from Pursers Travel Group
celebrating their success



Scott, Marlene, Karen, Madison, Nicole, Lauren and Rob
from the APT Travel Group



Global Journeys celebrating receiving the Number 1 Agency Sales QLD award and
McGeary Club 2025, while Hannah Campbell was inducted into the Million Dollar Club 2025



The Travel Agency at Caloundra awarded Diamond status
with Lisa Killen joining the Million Dollar Club 2025



Suraj Arachchige, alongside BDM Madison Baiar,
received the Outstanding Sales Multi Locations
2024 award for Diamond and Platinum stores
in Booval, Mt Ommaney, Carindale and Capalaba



Diamond agency Earl and Turner Travel Associates receiving
the QLD Outstanding Sales Achievement 2024 award

