

Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today features five pages of the latest industry news, plus a full page from **Disneyland Resort California**.

Discounts at Disney

AUSTRALIAN travellers can take advantage of a special offer at Disneyland Resort California - find out more on **page six**.

Win a free Bali trip

CONTIKI is offering one lucky Australian agent a free Bali trip and 50% off for a friend.

Advisors will earn an entry for every passenger they book on any of Contiki's three Indonesia trips before 30 Jun, and can attend a training session to earn a bonus entry - find out more **HERE**.

US volatility slams FCTG profits

FLIGHT Centre Travel Group (FCTG) has been forced to downgrade its underlying profit forecast for 2025 in the face of less certain trading conditions - exacerbated primarily by recent changes to the United States' trade and entry policies (**TD** breaking news).

Market volatility has continued into FCTG's busiest trading months of May and Jun, meaning the business is unlikely to deliver the 14-26.5% year-on-year growth it had initially predicted to achieve, equal to a \$365-405m underlying profit before tax.

FCTG anticipates its full-year 2025 underlying profit will now be between \$300-335 million, with erratic US economic and border policies helping to wipe out around \$67 million in profits.

Q2 earnings momentum reported at the half-year mark had flowed through to early Q3 results, however US policy changes began to negatively impact business and consumer confidence in early Mar, FCTG noted in an update this morning. "Early Apr trading results point to ongoing uncertainty, which looks likely to slow FCTG's growth in the heavily weighted May and Jun period," the company said.

Changes to American entry policies and tariffs have contributed to lower-than-expected TTV growth across all core brands, and as a result, super



over-rides, margins, and overall leverage have been impacted.

In response, FCTG has announced an on-market share buy-back of up to \$200 million.

The tactical share purchase will start on 12 May and be completed within 12 months.

The company has also actioned other short-term strategies to address the profit short-fall, including fast-tracking initiatives within its Global Business Services division to reduce \$20 million in costs, cut full-time staff in non-customer facing areas, trim capex by 15-20% for FY26; and work with suppliers to capitalise on opportunities flowing from short-term travel patterns shifting away from the United States.

The latest speed hump could also be bad news for the StudentUniverse brand, which was already under the microscope following a loss period (**TD** 08 May 2024).

FCTG confirmed the brand is on track to lose \$10 million this year, with a review into its future to be finalised on 30 Jun.

In Canada, losses will look to be stemmed by growing the

independent Envoyage brand, which has already grown TTV in the United States by 60% in the nine months to 31 Mar.

Despite the challenges, FCTG pointed to some strong foundational metrics that it believes will help weather the storm, including solid monthly profits; a strong liquidity position; access to undrawn debt facilities; and a positive medium- to long-term outlook. **AB**

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ATIA's Rockstar reveal

THE Australian Travel Industry Association (ATIA) has revealed the winners of its first renewal incentive (**TD** 06 Feb), in partnership with major sponsors Viking and Singapore Airlines.

Nineteen ATIA-accredited travel businesses have earned the title of 'Renewal Rockstar', which was open to all businesses who renewed their ATIA Accreditation before 31 Mar.

Exclusively Cruising took home this year's top prize of an eight-day Viking river or ocean cruise for two.

"I am incredibly grateful to ATIA and Viking for this generous and unforgettable opportunity," commented Julie O'Grady, Exclusively Cruising Director.

"Being part of an industry grounded in trust, professionalism and outstanding service means the world to me."

Other winners included Port Macquarie Travel, which scored

two economy class Qantas flights to Johannesburg; Anywhere Travel, which received a \$2,500 Intrepid Australia travel voucher; and Ready 2 Travel, which was given a \$350 Virgin Australia credit donated by CVFR Consolidation Services.

"It's been fantastic to see such strong member support for showcasing excellence through accreditation, and it's been even better to be able to reward that enthusiasm with our Renewal Rockstar Competition," said ATIA CEO Dean Long.

Viking Manager Director, Australia and NZ, Michelle Black added, "We're proud to be a part of a campaign that champions the vital work of travel advisors across the country".

"ATIA's unwavering advocacy, commitment to industry standards, and the resources it provides, continue to elevate our entire sector." **JM**



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CHINA AIRLINES

Brand USA overhaul

FIVE Brand USA board members have been abruptly fired by the Trump administration, *Skift* reports, including Chairman Elliott Ferguson.

The group was fired by email on Fri, the masthead's sources believe, with Ferguson out the door alongside Vice Chair Lauren Bailey, and Kristen Esposito, Allen Orr, and Tim Mapes.

That is almost half of the board's 11 members, who are appointed by the United States Secretary of Commerce, with input from the United States Secretaries of State and Homeland Security.

Ferguson was only one month into his 12-month term as Chair.

The moves come as the US attempts to fight back President Donald Trump's negative effect on the destination's perception, with visitation to the country plummeting this year.

Brand USA was unable to respond to questions ahead of **Travel Daily's** deadline.

Travel Daily
ON LOCATION



BRISBANE

Today's issue of **TD** is coming to you from the Australian Tourism Exchange (**ATE 2025**).

ONE of the biggest events in the travel and tourism calendar, Tourism Australia's ATE, begins today at the Brisbane Convention & Exhibition Centre and **Travel Daily** is here to cover the action.

Run in conjunction with Tourism & Events Queensland, day one of two will see the welcome session as well as a press conference with TA and TEQ take place while the trade floor opens as well.

This evening, The Star will host the Welcome Event on the Leisure Deck, with an afterparty at LiveWire.

AGENT INCENTIVE

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Qld has 'that holiday feeling'



QUEENSLAND is inviting Australians to embrace 'that holiday feeling' in its latest campaign, which launches across the country this week.

Featuring a fresh take on Madonna's 1980s pop anthem *Holiday* by Brisbane-born singer-songwriter Kita Alexander, the TV commercial spotlights the state's iconic holiday backdrops, including the Whitsundays, Daintree, Outback Queensland, Gold Coast, Brisbane, K'gari, Sunshine Coast, and the Great Barrier Reef.

"This is the start of something

bigger for Queensland - a clear, confident statement about where our state is headed," said Qld Premier David Crisafulli.

"That Holiday Feeling' captures everything locals and visitors love about this state - the natural beauty, the energy of our cities, the warmth of our people and the unforgettable memories made here."

The new brand platform will also include a full suite of assets for industry use, designed to give Queensland's visitor economy a boost ahead of the Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

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ALBATROSS TOURS

Aussies seek warmth

AUSTRALIANS are flocking to warmer destinations to escape the winter blues, according to new research from Skyscanner.

Nearly nine in 10 Aussies (85%) are planning to escape the cold and maximise their holidays this year, with a summer getaway top of mind, Skyscanner's latest research shows.

More than a third (34%) of Australians are looking to escape the cold by travelling to domestic locations, with some of the cheapest this winter including the Sunshine Coast and the Whitsunday Islands.

However Southern Australia is also a popular winter destination, despite its colder winter temperatures, Skyscanner has found, with Melbourne particularly hot with travellers.

Tasmania is also inexpensive to book this winter, as the destination pushes its annual 'Come Down For Air' campaign,

despite its average winter high coming in at 12°C.

Almost a third (31%) of Australians are planning to jet overseas; however 40% of us are yet to book a trip, with indecisiveness and lack of destinations inspiration claimed to be key inhibitors.

Almost half of those surveyed (47%) are seeking destinations where their money goes further, and are open to travelling on less popular days for better deals.

Skyscanner Travel Expert Jarrod Kris said cost of living has more Aussies considering their own backyard for a warmer escape.

"Aussies are looking to other avenues to get bang for their buck, including travelling domestically," he noted.

According to Skyscanner, some of the cheapest winter destinations in 2025 are Tasmania, the Sunshine Coast and Hamilton Island. *MS*



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ATE Brisbane biggest ever



TOURISM Australia's Australian Tourism Exchange (ATE) has kicked off today in partnership with Tourism & Events Queensland at the Brisbane Convention & Exhibition Centre.

This year marks the first time in decades that ATE has returned to Brisbane and is also the biggest in its 45-year history, with 1,600 seller delegates, 640 seller organisations, 726 global buyers and 652 buyer companies.

A group of new faces has descended on the event as well, with 61 first-time sellers and 130 first-time buyers.

"We've been doing ATE for 45 years now and it keeps going from strength to strength - in a world where distribution is being disrupted and changing, there is still an incredible need for business-to-business and people-to-people connection," Tourism

Australia Managing Director Phillipa Harrison (**pictured**) said.

She revealed a great mix of where buyers had come from, with 147 from Greater China, 81 from the Americas, and 75 from Europe, among the various external regions represented.

Australia, meanwhile, had 215 buyers in attendance.

"You can see that we have a real spread - ATE is one of the forums where we spread our net wide, with about 31 countries here on the trade floor," Harrison added.

Among the other statistics Harrison shared was an increase in annual visitations.

For the year to Feb 2025, holidays increased 14% year-on-year, while business trips rose by 5% year-on-year.

ATE will continue tomorrow with **Travel Daily** bringing you all the news. *DF*

Asia in focus for TA

TOURISTS from Greater China and the broader Asia regions have been earmarked as a significant focus for Tourism Australia after substantial growth.

"From 2010 to 2019, Asian source destinations grew by 100 percent and they are going to continue to grow by 50 percent," Tourism Australia Managing Director Phillipa Harrison told media today at ATE 2025.

She reassured the crowd that Western markets are still important, they just are not seeing growth rates in visitors as big as Asia.

"Western markets are still always going to be so important for Australia and our industry but they are just growing at a slower rate," she explained.

According to the ABS Overseas Arrivals data for the 12 months to Feb 2025, Greater China provided 1.2 million people, 416,000 came from Singapore and 396,000 from Japan.

India also showed substantial visitation with 448,000 people.

MEANWHILE, Hong Kong has registered strong figures of Australians going the other way, with the Hong Kong Tourism Board lauding a 32% YOY increase in visitations.

Karen Macmillan, Director, Australia, New Zealand & South Pacific said, "We're thrilled to see such strong momentum from the Australian market".

"Hong Kong is back in a big way, from world-class events to exciting new infrastructure."

Window Seat

RYANAIR may be cheap, but passengers falling foul of its strict luggage rules have found it anything but cheerful.

Passengers are allowed one small item of luggage for free.

And small means small - 40 x 20 x 25cm - and it must go under the seat in front.

While passengers can pay for extra baggage while booking, or even when checking in, rocking up at the gate with a larger bag will result in a substantially larger fee.

One passenger recently paid a €60 (A\$106) fee because one wheel of her wheelee suitcase didn't fit in the bag sizer.

Another had to pay the €60 fee for her 750 mL water bottle - she was 'wearing' it on a strap around her body, but staff insisted it had to go in her backpack.

The bottle fit, but the backpack then bulged beyond the confines of the bag sizer, so she reluctantly paid the fee - it must have been a pretty special water bottle.

Meanwhile, a concert violinist couldn't bring her fragile 200-year-old instrument in the cabin because it was 1cm too long.

Understandably reluctant to put it in the hold, she was able to get a last-minute seat with another airline.

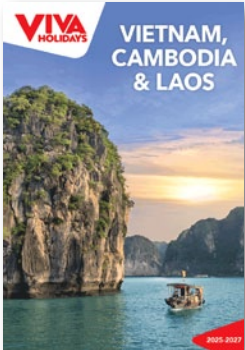
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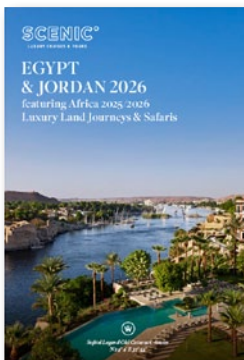
Viva Holidays - Vietnam, Cambodia & Laos
Viva Holidays has debuted its newest destination range with the release of its 2025-27 Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos brochure, to meet increasing customer demand for the region. South East Asia is the ideal holiday destination to explore new cultures, visit ancient sites and savour delicious food. With rates valid until Mar 2027, customer holidays can be booked further in advance and the new brochure features a wide range of accommodation, activities and tour experiences, including Ha Long Bay cruises for

both day and overnight itineraries and a wide selection of cultural and culinary guided day tours, across all three countries.



Emerald River Cruises - Luxury Europe
Travellers looking for their next luxury Europe river cruise should look no further than Emerald River Cruises' new brochure, which highlights its journeys on the Rhine, Moselle, Main and Danube rivers, as well as the Saone, Rhone, and Douro. The 124-page brochure details popular itineraries like the 25-day 'Eastern European Escapade & Splendours of Europe', as well as new offerings including the eight-day 'Legendary Rhine & Moselle' and the eight-day 'Festive Sensations of Lyon

& Provence'. Readers will also find information on Emerald's optional excursions, as well as a European seasons guide.



Scenic - Egypt & Jordan 2026
Scenic Cruises has unveiled its latest brochure, which showcases its range of Egypt and Jordan luxury land journeys. Travellers are invited to discover stories of ancient civilisations, from the Pyramids of Giza to a luxurious cruise along the mighty Nile. For instance, clients can learn all about the operator's 12-day 'Southern Africa Discovery' and the 16-day 'Alexandria & Ancient Egypt' itineraries. The digital publication also includes detailed information on excursions, African safari

lodges and game drives, and exclusive offers for 2026.

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SeaLink ramps up for 2025



SEALINK Marine & Tourism has unveiled a host of new experiences, tours and investments at the Australian Tourism Exchange (ATE) 2025 in Brisbane today.

The operator announced a \$57 million investment for two new Kangaroo Island ferries, *Wanggami* and *Ruwi*, which will launch later this year, offering more capacity and accessibility.

"Our mission is to connect people with Australia's most unique and beautiful places - sustainably and meaningfully," said Donna Gauci, CEO of SeaLink Marine & Tourism.

"From new product offerings and infrastructure upgrades to immersive cultural experiences, we're continuing to innovate and invest in ways that invite more travellers to discover the brilliance of our backyard."

SeaLink will also introduce two new Indigenous tours, including a full-day cultural experience on Kangaroo Island led by Ngarrindjeri elder Mark Koolmatrice, who will share

insights into Dreamtime stories, sacred sites, bush tucker, and traditional medicines.

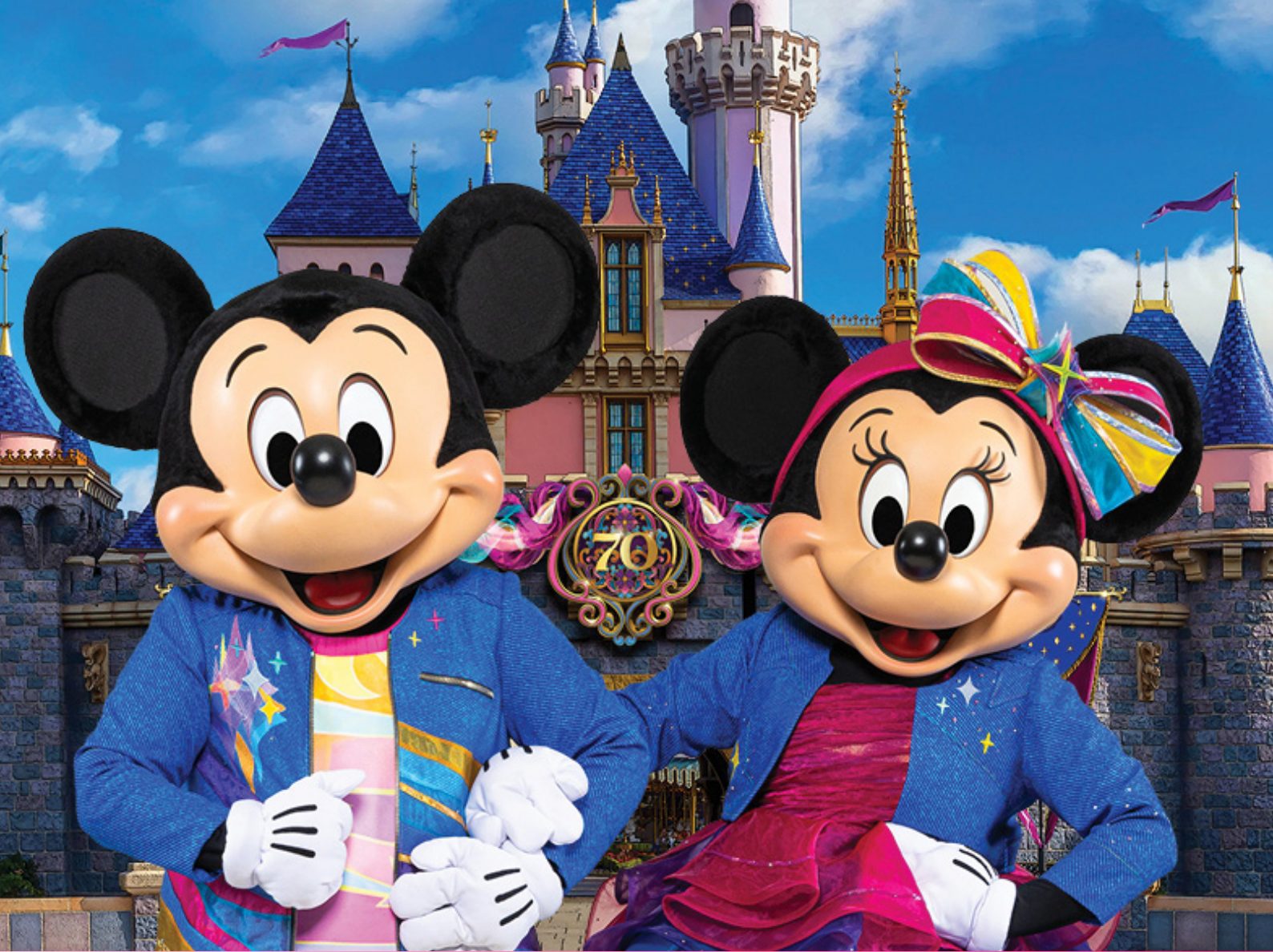
The other new offering is a half-day tour of North Stradbroke Island, led by Matt Burns, a Noonuccal and Nughi man of the Quandamooka People.

Guests will enjoy storytelling, bush tucker, didgeridoo and dance demonstrations, as well as learn traditional skills passed down through generations.

Additionally, SeaLink Sydney's Captain Cook Cruises will host special sailing, events and giveaways throughout 2025 to mark its 55th anniversary.

Highlights include a new premium sunset dinner cruise on the Sydney Harbour, featuring a curated menu with locally sourced ingredients and expertly paired wines, as well as a Vivid Sydney 2025 experience on board luxury superyacht, *The Jackson*.

SeaLink has also expanded its river cruise offering in Perth, with the Swan Valley Wine Cruise and Dinner experiences to now run twice weekly in peak periods. *JM*



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