

Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily features seven pages, including our **Corporate Update** plus full pages from:

- Hong Kong Airlines
- Italian Tourist Board

A new way to fly

TRAVELLERS can soon enjoy a new way to fly direct from Melbourne to Asia thanks to Hong Kong Airlines - see **page eight**.

Get to know Italy

AGENTS can become an expert on all things Italy by enrolling in the Travel to Italy Academy.

Find out more on **page nine**.

AKTG's agency advisors

ABERCROMBIE & Kent Travel Group (AKTG) has appointed two Australian travel agency owners to a new advisory board, as the luxury travel company looks to form closer bonds with travel agents around the world.

The push to strengthen AKTG's trade focus has seen Goldman Travel Group's Anthony Goldman (**pictured**) and Gregor & Lewis Bespoke Travel Managing Director Melinda Gregor recruited to the new board, with further local recruitments flagged.

To spearhead the new trade advisory initiative, AKTG has named Marett Taylor as Chair



of the Global AKTG Advisory Board & Trade Relations, in which capacity she will meet with appointed board advisors several times a year to provide guidance on product development, market trends, and trade initiatives.

In her new position, Taylor will continue to report to Chief Executive Officer Cristina Levis.

"Marett has built exceptional foundations for our global sales teams across both brands," Levis said, adding the role will allow AKTG to leverage her expertise to more deeply engage with trade partners in guiding the company's strategic direction.

The restructure will not impact Debra Fox's role as Executive Vice President, which will see her continue to lead Crystal's and A&K's trade sales in APAC and the UK, as well as serve as MD for Abercrombie & Kent Tour Operating businesses in Australia and the United Kingdom.

The news follows a flurry of major developments and trade enhancements from AKTG, including a complete revamp of its travel agent portal and booking systems (**TD** 13 Aug 2024), and the flagged return of the Cox & Kings brand to the Australian market (**TD** 08 Apr). **AB**

Win a Vancouver trip

DESTINATION Vancouver and Air Canada have launched an incentive for cruise specialists ahead of its inaugural attendance at Cruise360 in Brisbane.

Agents can win a trip for two to Vancouver if they complete two training programs - register **HERE**.

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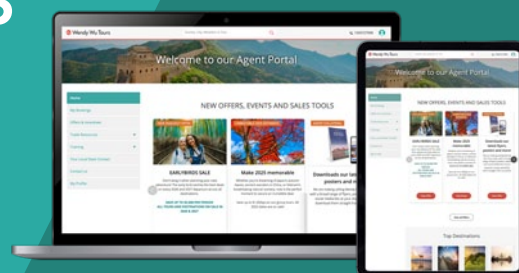
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NEW AGENT PORTAL INCENTIVE

Book any pax on the portal by 31 August to receive a **\$20 voucher** — plus go in the draw to **win a \$250 voucher!**

FIND OUT MORE

Wendy Wu Tours



A wild start to XChange



TO KICK off Express Travel Group's annual XChange conference in Adelaide this week, a select group of travel agents were treated to a tour of Monarto Safari Park and resort, hosted by Journey Beyond.

Located 60 minutes from the CBD, Monarto Safari Resort was unveiled earlier this year (**TD 23 Jan**), offering unique accommodation next to Monarto Safari Park, claimed to be the biggest safari experience in the world outside of Africa, sprawling across 1,500 hectares of land.

During their visit to the Resort, Journey Beyond's Imogen Rivers took agents through the property, where they conducted hotel inspections and enjoyed a glass of Bollinger overlooking the plains, which was followed by a long lunch at Kutjera restaurant.

In the afternoon, the group took part in a two-hour safari

experience through the Wild Africa precinct, where they spotted a multitude of exotic animals, including cheetahs, zebras, giraffes, hippos, ostriches, and plenty more.

Later that night, conference attendees were invited to a soiree hosted by Viking at Sora restaurant, where they enjoyed cocktails at the sashimi bar, while hearing from Viking's Director of Sales and Revenue, Keira Smith, as well as Erik de Roos, Chief Marketing Officer at South Australia Tourism Commission.

This is the first year that ETG's annual Xchange conference has taken place in Australia, which will conclude tomorrow. *JHM*

Pictured: Lindy Herron, South Coast Cruise and Travel; Holly Gurskis, RAA Travel; Helen Vanbuuren, RAA Travel; and Brianna Herron, from South Coast Cruise and Travel.

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MG advisor incentive

FRESH from making its Aussie debut this year (**TD 05 May**), Southeast-based B2B accommodation provider MG Bedbank has launched its first local travel advisor incentive.

The new 'Booking Bonanza' campaign kicked off this week and will run through to 30 Sep, offering the top-selling agent a luxury trip for two to Bali.

Included in the grand prize are return airfares for two, five nights of luxury hotel accommodation, transfers, a Bali ATV adventure, and a white water rafting pass.

Outside of the major prize, advisors will earn \$50 rewards in their MG Friends account for every booking made over \$1,000.

"We are thrilled to launch the campaign as a direct 'thank you' to our Australian agent partners," MG's General Manager for Australia James Whiting said.

"This campaign not only rewards them for their hard work



but also showcases the depth of our Asia inventory and our commitment to helping them succeed," he added.

Headquartered in Indonesia, MG offers real-time rates and availability across a global portfolio of 350,000 hotels. *AB*

Princess Japan push

PRINCESS Cruises has unveiled its largest deployment ever in Japan for the 2027 season.

The program includes 78 departures across 50 itineraries, with voyages ranging in length from seven to 28 days.

Bookings can be made from 20 Aug - more info in **Cruise Weekly**.

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when experience matters

HK Airlines sessions

HONG Kong Airlines is inviting travel agents to join its live webinars every Wed for the next three weeks, featuring updates on direct Sydney and Melbourne services, its Asia network, and onboard product highlights.

Register now at hongkong.sydney@worldaviation.com.au.

Job jogs memories

CREATING memorable experiences for clients is the leading source of motivation for travel advisors around the world, claims a new RateHawk report.

While the global dataset did not include Aussies, more than half of respondents listed unforgettable memories at the top of the list.

When advisors were asked what they like most about their jobs, exploring new destinations and accommodations ranked highly, as did access to special rates.

Only one in five said it was because of a "decent income".

SIA books return flight

SINGAPORE Airlines will return as the major sponsor of the 2025 National Travel Industry Awards (NTIA), marking its fourth consecutive year as the event's marquee brand partner.

Australian Travel Industry Association CEO Dean Long said he was thrilled to welcome Singapore Airlines back for another awards season.

"The airline's continued support is a sign of significant commitment to our industry and to the people who power it.

"NTIAs are all about celebrating excellence and building our collective future, and we could not ask for a more dedicated partner than Singapore Airlines to help bring that vision to life," Long added.

Singapore Airlines General Manager Agency Sales, Greg McJarrow (**pictured**), said his carrier is proud to once again lead the celebration of the nation's



outstanding travel professionals at the NTIAs.

"These awards shine a light on the businesses and individuals who go above and beyond to deliver exceptional service and experiences for Australian travellers," he said.

"As a long-standing partner to the industry, we're delighted to play a part in honouring the achievements of its people and supporting a vibrant, resilient travel sector."

The NTIA gala will be held on Sat, 18 Oct at The Star, Brisbane, a day after the Beyond Borders Travel Summit on Fri 17 Oct. AB

Travel Daily
ON LOCATION



SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Today's issue of *Travel Daily* is coming to you from Adelaide, where ETG's XChange is continuing this weekend.

IT IS an inspiring start to day two of XChange, with ETG Chairman Tom Manwaring taking to the stage, reflecting on the achievements of the business, followed by ETG's Group General Manager Jason Aghan and Helloworld's CEO Andrew Burnes.

Attendees mingled over coffee and morning tea before they heard product updates from Viking, Creative Cruising and many more.

Tonight, guests will let their hair down at the Momentum Mixer hosted by TTC.

Vietnam Airlines SKYTEAM
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Depart from Perth - Ho Chi Minh City/Hanoi - bus transit to Mù Cang Chải

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Vic tourism anxious about low visibility

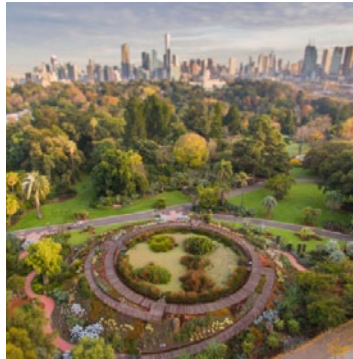
EXCLUSIVE

TOURISM operators in Victoria have listed limited budgets and internal resourcing as the biggest challenges facing their marketing teams next year.

The finding was contained in a batch of exclusive insights provided to **Travel Daily** by marketing agency Scooter, which sought to map out the future landscape for marketers in the travel and tourism sectors.

Four in five Victorian tourism respondents noted a strain on budgets is likely to be an obstacle in 2026, with 65% also suggesting they will be tested trying to stay innovative with fewer resources.

In a concerning sign for Victoria's tourism sector, almost half of businesses conceded they are worried about losing cut-through in a crowded destination landscape, while around a third said they will be forced to combat lower visibility due to reduced



state-led consumer campaigns.

The latter point was raised as a concern by an irate Victoria Tourism Industry Council (VTIC) earlier this year, which lambasted the Victorian Government for failing to restore any of the cuts made to its tourism marketing budget in 2024.

Instead, the state's budget was maintained at \$26 million in the latest budget for 2025/26.

"This is difficult to rationalise when you consider that Victoria's visitor economy is projected to

grow to nearly \$55 billion by 2030 and we already employ nearly 290,000 people in our sector, with more than half of those in regional Victoria," VTIC CEO Felicia Mariani said back in May. "We are a net-positive investment when you acknowledge that we deliver immediate return on investment by driving visitors to the state who have already injected \$40 billion into our economy.

"More importantly, you don't need to wait five years in building complex infrastructure before the state sees any return," she added.

The Scooter survey also showed that successfully reaching new visitor segments without state-wide support is anxiety-inducing for roughly one in five Victorian tourism businesses.

Adapting to changes in travel behaviours and expectations is viewed as a hurdle for around 45% of businesses as well. AB

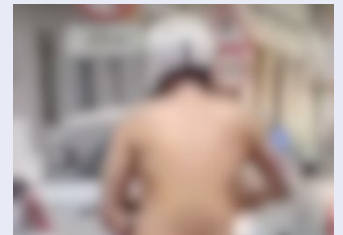


Window seat

A GERMAN tourist who drove his motorcycle through a Maltese town naked will need to put some pants on with some rather deep pockets, after being slugged with a hefty €1,200 fine (A\$2,147).

Amine El Makhfi was caught on video driving through the streets of Pieta wearing nothing but a helmet.

Unfortunately for the unabashed tourist, the video was shared thousands of times on social media, helping authorities track him down.



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BPG up for four awards

TRAVEL Daily's parent company Business Publishing Group (BPG) is chuffed to reveal it has been shortlisted in four categories at this year's prestigious Mumbrella Publish Awards.

Among the honours BPG is vying for this year include the coveted Newsletter of the Year award, with **Travel Daily** getting the nod in a field of five, which also includes *Broadsheet*, *Broadsheet Media*; *CPA Update*, *CPA Australia*; *Money Magazine*, *Rainmaker Information*; and *The Energy*, *Asco Investments*.

Travel Daily's Travel24 was also lucky enough to make the cut in a hot group of important events.

The shortlist for the Event or Virtual Event of the Year category includes blue-chip gatherings such as the Women In Leadership Awards 2025 from *The Australian Financial Review*.

Meanwhile the short-listed finalists in the Special Edition of the Year award will see our deep dive into adventure travel compete with the likes of Qantas Magazine's Medium Rare Content

Joyce the main talent

MYLINDA Joyce has started her new role at The Travel Corporation as Global Head of Talent and Capability.

Joyce (**pictured**) has worked at TTC for the past three years and was previously Learning and Development Manager ANZ & Learning & Development Projects Global Lead.

Prior to working in the travel industry, Joyce honed her training skills at Swarovski in roles in Australia and around the world.



Agency, as well as Journey Beyond's fascinating *The Journey: Australia By Train - Storyation*.

And last, but certainly not least, is the nod to our Editorial Director Damian Francis, who has been included in esteemed company for the Columnist of the Year accolade.

Francis has added plenty of depth and texture to our reporting - especially in penning some fascinating deep dives into the aviation sector as part of *travelBulletin's* Weekly Wrap and regular features. **AB**

Koala brings fresh air

A POSSIBLE upcoming launch of Koala Airlines would be "a breath of fresh air in a stagnant market", Big Red Group CEO John Boris has declared (**TD** 05 Aug).

The leader of Australia's largest experience network has welcomed the flagged introduction of a new player in the aviation industry, which he believes has the potential to disrupt the current duopoly held by Qantas and Virgin Australia.

"For too long, travellers have paid the price - quite literally - with limited domestic options, and an uncertain market which led to sky-high fares that curbed visitor numbers to regions that rely on tourist dollars," Boris said.

"The introduction of Koala Airlines [would] bring with it more competition as well as more choice for consumers, and most importantly, connectivity to regions that are the backbone of Australia's tourism and experiences industry.

"We hope the new carrier brings fresh momentum to a market crying out for change," he added.

EXPERIENCE MORE OF ALASKA WITH NORWEGIAN CRUISE LINE

IN WEEK four of NCL's Experience More of the World campaign, team members share favourite moments from sailing the *Last Frontier*.

Lara Anderson, NCL's BDM for Victoria, hosted agents at a Seminar at Sea aboard *Norwegian Jade*®, sailing from Whittier to Vancouver.

"*Norwegian Jade* offers a more intimate way to experience Alaska's wonders, including Hubbard Glacier and Icy Strait Point.

"It never felt crowded and there were no queues at restaurants," said Anderson.

Favourite port: Skagway - "The White Pass Scenic Railway is one of the most spectacular rail journeys in the world!"



Angela Middleton, Director of Sales AUNZ, sailed with her family on *Norwegian Bliss*® from Seattle.

"Experiencing the thoughtful little touches NCL offers gave me a whole new perspective," she said.

Glacier Bay was a standout moment with hot chocolates served on The Waterfront®,

while onboard rangers narrated the journey and pointed out wildlife sightings.

Favourite port: Skagway - "We took a scenic tour up the pass and crossed into Canada just as it started snowing - magical!"

Craig McLaurin, Field Sales Manager Aust. & BDM Queensland South has sailed on both *Norwegian Joy*® and *Norwegian Bliss*®.

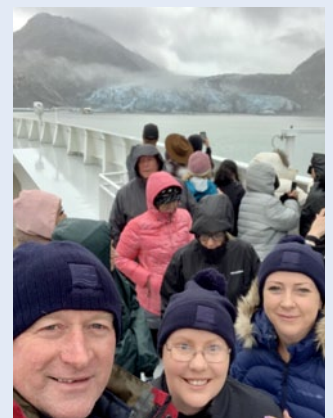
"Both offer incredible variety of dining and entertainment options, not to mention incredible floor-to-ceiling 180-degree views from the Observation Lounge."

Favourite ports: Ketchikan - quirky, historic and cute with great bars, and Icy Strait Point, for the small-town vibe and amazing wildlife.

Don't forget to complete this week's Alaska quiz to add to your NCL passport and stay in the running to win one of TWO unforgettable cruises* - one near, and one far!

Visit here: [experiencemorewithncl.com](https://www.experiencemorewithncl.com)

FAMIL IN FOCUS is our feature showcasing some of the photos from recent industry famils. If you want your famil to be featured, email



CORPORATE UPDATE

APAC lagging on loyalty

BUSINESS travellers in the Asia Pacific region are well behind their North American counterparts when it comes to earning rewards through hotel loyalty programs.

According to a global survey conducted by BCD Travel, only 58% of corporate flyers in Asia Pacific are members of a hotel loyalty program.

Only 47% are actively or frequently choosing to stay at a hotel tied to their loyalty status to accrue rewards or points.

Conversely, the study found 99% of American business travellers are in a hotel loyalty scheme, with 85% deliberately staying where they can earn status.

The study found most travellers are generally happy with their business' hotel policies, with most opting for three- or four-star properties when travelling.

Hotel location was a clear top priority, the survey found, followed by employer policy and cost, with many who are away



for longer periods preferring an apartment over a hotel room so they can prepare meals and do their own laundry.

Bleisure appears to be passe, according to the BCD study, with only 20% of respondents saying they will indulge in some R&R post-business, while over 68% said they would never bring their partner or family on work trips.

BCD Travel found sustainability is not a high consideration for half of global travellers, with only one in five considering issues such as eco-certification, single-use plastic usage or energy and water saving measures.

Experts at BCD said they will recommend sustainability and loyalty program strategies for companies sourcing their hotels for 2026 and beyond to better align with traveller preferences and drive program adoption.

"We advise clients to embed sustainability into their annual hotel sourcing exercise and then clearly communicate expectations and targets back to travellers to help them make better choices," commented BCD Travel Senior Vice President of Hotel Solutions, April Bridgeman (**pictured**). *ML*

Priorities for 2025

LARGE organisations are again prioritising in-person meetings in 2025, reinstating travel budgets to facilitate human interaction, a new SAP Concur survey reveals.

The study of 3,750 business travellers found that despite uncertainty on travel-related policies, 94% said travel is essential to success, with 39% stating it drives better results.

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ADL project takes flight



ADELAIDE Airport has kicked off the next phase of its \$600 million infrastructure upgrade program, called Project Flight (**TD** 03 Nov 2023).

Upcoming works include an expansion of the check-in hall, with capacity to be increased by 25%, and the replacement of all existing check-in equipment with the latest technology.

The airport will also expand its terminal with a 10,000m² extension at the northern end, commencing at the start of 2026, and including new domestic gate lounges and aerobridges.

The southern end of the terminal will also be expanded by more than 5,500m² from early 2027, with two new domestic and three new regional gates.

Security screening regulatory upgrades to pax and checked baggage screening, including the rollout of body scanners and 3D X-ray bag scanners, will also be completed by the end of 2025.

A new rose for Dubai

ROSEWOOD Hotels & Resorts is landing in Dubai in 2029 with the opening of two properties - the ultra-luxurious Rosewood Dubai and Rosewood Residences Dubai - located in the upcoming Peninsula Dubai, set within the city's waterfront district.

The new project is owned by Bright Start and developer H&H.

The 195-key Rosewood Hotel will offer guests access to a private beach and beach club, an Explorers Club for kids, four dining venues, a wellness centre and experiences focused around art, music and food.

Adjacent to the hotel will be the high-end Rosewood Residences Dubai, located on Jumeirah Beach and overlooking the skyline.

The residential property will feature 63 rooms and five exclusive beachfront villas, as well as a 24-hour concierge, a spa, padel court, private cinema, library and lounge.

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For one day only - today - **Vietjet** has unlocked savings of up to 80% on Eco fares across its entire domestic and international network, including flights from Australia to Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi. Deals are live from 3am today (08 Aug) until 2am tomorrow (09 Aug). Enter booking code 'VJ80' when booking via the website or app - **CLICK HERE**.

Travellers itching for a last-minute getaway can take advantage of a new suite of deals from **AAT Kings** in New Zealand, Tasmania and the WA outback. The operator's 11-day 'Wonders of the Kimberley' has been cut in price from \$9,140 to \$7,769 for a 05 Sep 2025 departure. Or try the 21-day 'Spirit of New Zealand', down from \$11,505 to \$9,779 for departure on 02 Oct 2025. For more details, phone AAT Kings on 1300 228 546.

A world of cruise deals awaits with **Cunard** as part of its 'Grandest Destinations' campaign, which features a range of amazing fares across all four Queens. Specials are valid for departures in 2025, 2026 and 2027 and include Alaska, Europe, Africa, South America and the Caribbean. Bookings are open until 29 Sep - **CLICK HERE** for more information.

Collette has slashed \$1,125 per person from the price of its 15-day trip from Tokyo to Seoul for select remaining departures in 2025 if booked by 31 Aug. The itinerary includes a bullet train ride from Tokyo to Kyoto and a visit to the DMZ in South Korea. **CLICK HERE** to find out more.


Secure your stateroom on a **Hurtigruten** voyage along the Norwegian coast with just a \$250 deposit for all new bookings made by 31 Aug for departures from 01 Apr 2026 to 31 Mar 2027. Simply pay the \$250 deposit within seven days of booking, with a second payment of 25% of the booking value due 45 days after booking, then the balance can be paid off in instalments up to 90 days before departure - **CLICK HERE**.

Enjoy 30% off 'Discovery' stays at **Pan Pacific** and **Parkroyal** hotels for bookings made by 31 Aug for stays until 31 Mar 2026. Rates include daily breakfast, dining discounts, free wi-fi and more - **CLICK HERE** for more.

South African Airways has extended sales on special G, W and L-class seats to Johannesburg, Cape Town, Durban and Port Elizabeth until 13 Aug. The fare is valid for travel through Nov 2025, from 01 Feb-31 Mar 2026 and all of May. Seats are on sale in GDS and booking systems now.

Save up to €2,000 (A\$3,582) per suite in **Explora Journeys'** new 'Invitation to Explore' sale. Available for reservations for Ocean Terrace Suites made by 26 Aug, the discount is valid for select departures in 2025 and 2026. **CLICK HERE** for further details.




Grab your walking shoes and enjoy 10% off a new walking adventure in Spain with **On Foot Holidays**. A new week-long hiking route through northern Spain showcases major peaks, cute villages and the monasteries of the Cantabrian mountains. Bookings are now open for departure in Sep and Oct 2025 or for early summer 2026 - **CLICK HERE**.



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Moreton game-changer



THE Comiskey Group, parent company of the Sandstone Point development, has unveiled a "game-changing" \$250 million expansion of the facility.

The Moreton Bay development will include the region's first greenfield five-star hotel, offering 202 rooms across 10 storeys and two buildings (render pictured).

Guests will be able to choose from one-, two-, and three-bedroom suites, designed with sweeping views of the Pumicestone Channel.

Key features will also include an infinity pool overlooking the water, an adults-only pool with a swim-up bar and live DJ sets, a rejuvenating wellness centre, a Mediterranean restaurant, and a fully equipped gym.

There will also be family-friendly pools, and state-of-the-art function spaces designed for weddings, corporate retreats, and social events.

The precinct will offer a vibrant retail and entertainment precinct as well, with dining options and indoor entertainment, such as a bowling alley. *MS*

Symphony tune up

CRYSTAL Symphony is set to undergo a dry dock, with the ship's suites and public areas to be upgraded this Nov.

The three-week project will be focused on refining the onboard experience through aesthetic and functional updates, in particular to the aquamarine and sapphire classic suite categories.

Several public spaces will also be updated, including the Atrium, the Crystal Cove bar, stair lobbies on decks 5 and 6, a new Starlite Club, and more.

Park Hyatt KL open

PARK Hyatt Kuala Lumpur has opened, marking the brand's debut in Malaysia.

The hotel is housed in the 680-metre Merdeka 118, the tallest skyscraper in the Asia Pacific region.

Park Hyatt Kuala Lumpur will occupy floors 75-114 of the building, offering views of the city's skyline.

The hotel will offer 252 rooms with floor-to-ceiling windows.

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HKG - MEL	HX013	23:10	11:30+1	Mon, Wed, Fri



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