

### Today's issue of TD

*Travel Daily* today features seven pages of the latest travel industry news, including a photo page from **Viking**, and a full page from **APT Travel**.

### Altura signs on DMC

**ALTURA** Travel Group has forged a partnership with Earthen Experiences, an India-based DMC specialising in tailored journeys across India, Nepal, and Sri Lanka.

The Sunshine Coast-based business that is headed up by former CATO executive Brett Harvey launched earlier this year (**TD 07 Jul**), and will now look to connect Earthen Experiences with Australian trade partners.

### VA itch is scratched

**VIRGIN** Australia is a step closer to allowing small pets to travel with passengers, with its bid to amend the Food Standards Code approved by FSANZ.

The latest development paves the way for its plan to sanction small cats and dogs to be safely stowed under the seats of customers on selected flights.

## MEL receives new airline

**COMPETITION** to mainland China from Australian ports is heating back up, with Shenzhen Airlines set to join the fray after announcing flights connecting Melbourne and Shenzhen.

Set to operate thrice weekly using Airbus A330-300s, the Chinese airline will begin operations on 22 Dec, according to data from AeroRoutes.

Shenzhen Bao'an International Airport is currently only connected to Australia via a China Southern service, which operates three times a week into Sydney.

For Shenzhen Airlines, it marks the 15th country it will service, and also gives Star Alliance members in Victoria a new option for China and beyond.

The new player may prove popular for travellers needing to visit Hong Kong as well, with Hong Kong International Airport an easy 14-minute high-speed train ride from Shenzhen, and also accessible via ferry.

Hong Kong travellers already have significantly increased options, with the recent news that Melbourne will be connected



to the city on a new flight from Hong Kong Airlines starting in Dec this year (**TD 23 Jul**).

**MEANWHILE**, Hong Kong-based carrier Cathay Pacific has ordered 14 more Boeing 777-9 jets, bringing its orders up to 35 for the world's largest twin-engined airliner.

With a range of around 13,500km, the B777-9 will allow CX to connect passengers directly between Hong Kong and global long-haul destination. **DF**

### Win APT Canada trip

**WIN** an unforgettable Canadian adventure for two with APT.

Read all the details on **page eight** of today's edition.

### New Indo Club Med

**CLUB** Med has made good on its plan to open another resort in Indonesia (**TD 08 Sep 2023**), signing a deal with Paradise Indonesia to launch a property in North Sulawesi in 2028.

Club Med Manado will feature 250 rooms and offer views of the Molucca Sea and Mount Klabat, as well as dining concepts that will blend international cuisines with local Manadonese flavours.

### EK battery pack ban

**EMIRATES** has become one of the first major airlines to ban the use of power banks or battery packs during flights.

Effective from 10 Oct, the prohibition comes after a number of examples of battery packs catching fire, including on a Virgin Australia flight (**TD 22 Jul**).

While the packs will still be able to be transported on EK, they must now be placed in the seat pocket or in a bag under the seat in front of the passenger.

### MSC changes tack

**THE** MSC Group is plotting a new course in local leadership, only months after appointing Nicole Costantin to head up sales for both MSC Cruises and Explora Journeys in the Australian market.

A job ad posted on LinkedIn confirms the Geneva-based cruise company is seeking to recruit a managing director Australia and NZ for Explora Journeys.

It is understood Costantin has reverted back to managing sales solely for Explora Journeys, after assuming responsibility for both brands in Feb.

The job ad states the role will be based in Sydney, and be charged with executing the go-to-market strategy with a focus on trade partner relationships, and driving sustainable business development in the B2C channels.

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## ETG's XChange marks new chapter

**EXPRESS** Travel Group (ETG) wrapped up its conference on Sat in Adelaide - the first since industry veteran and CEO Tom Manwaring announced his retirement and Jason Aghan began as Group GM on 01 Jul.

"It is a change from being in a 7am to 7pm job and [turning] into an 8.30am breakfast type of guy," Manwaring quipped.

The experienced executive considered retirement years ago when Helloworld's Andrew Burnes approached him about acquiring the business, and now, according to Aghan, ETG is "in the best shape it has ever been in".

"It is the way that Tom has run the business over its journey, but it's also [due to] being part of an organisation like Helloworld, with its size, scale and volume of business," Aghan told **TD**.

"That adds a lot of benefit to our business, and in turn, puts us in a position to offer a lot



more value to our members and possibly target new members."

Now, Aghan's top priority is for ETG to continue delivering as it has under Manwaring.

"My goal is to make sure that what he has built...remains the same, then once we start to see those continued great results, there will be time to look at other alternative options," Aghan said.

During his 55-year career, Manwaring has witnessed several global crises, from SARS to COVID.

Despite geopolitical tensions, he hopes that if the RBA drops interest rates this year, the cost of money will become cheaper, weakening the hit of tariffs and keeping job numbers strong -

while Aussies continue to travel.

"I don't think they could throw anything more challenging to us than COVID, shy of having a world war," Manwaring said.

While some consumers may turn to AI, there will be others who appreciate agents' skills.

"You have the latest info in your brain and that is something you really have to support, promote and charge a fee for," he said.

"Margins will be diminishing because of the reductions in commissions, but you don't rely on commission to run a business.

"You run a business by growing revenue and charging for your fees and expertise."

It was also ETG's first domestic conference, but during the gala awards on Sat night, GM of Partnerships Alisha Doppe hinted the next one will be in either Bali, Hong Kong or Malaysia. **JHM**

**Pictured:** Manwaring with Aghan in Adelaide last week.



## Window Seat

**WHILE** Hawaii is no stranger to surfers hanging 10 on its famous breaks, rarely does one get to see a ferry take a bottom turn on a big wave.

But tourists taking in one of Waikiki's most popular breaks, Kewalos, were stunned to see a passenger ferry plunging down the glassy walls of a great two-metre swell.

No, this was not some kind of emerging new adrenaline sport, but rather an Atlantis Adventures vessel getting caught by surprise in rough seas - thankfully nobody was injured in the incident.



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## Brown takes the chair

**ANNE** Brown has been appointed Chairperson of Airservices Australia for the next three years, adding to her five years of experience on the board.

Brown is the first woman to take on the role, and will help lead a number of major transformation and modernisation programs.

## Disney to exit Australia

**THE** Australian cruise sector has been rocked once again by another withdrawal from a major international player, this time Disney Cruise Line (DCL) confirming its local departure.

Over the weekend, the family-focused cruise line's shoreside guest services team confirmed *Disney Wonder* would not be returning to homeport for the 2026/2027 season - with no future return date flagged.

"We are currently going to be sailing in the Australia and New Zealand region up until Feb 2026," DCL Shoreside Guest Services Specialist Tristan Mumblow told *Yahoo News*.

"Sailings from Australia and NZ remain on our list for future consideration," he added.

DCL now joins a growing list of cruise brands making the call to reposition ships outside of local waters, with Virgin Voyages and Cunard both choosing to pull the pin on future Australian seasons.

Responding to the sad development, Australia Cruise Association CEO Jill Abel told *Travel Daily* that DCL's exit was "certainly disappointing".

"It has been wonderful to have [the cruise line] in our market for what will be three years," Abel said, adding she hopes to welcome DCL back to Australia in "the near future".

Both the ACA and Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA) Australasia have been critical of Australia's and NZ's policies to



properly incentivise and retain local cruise deployments, citing both high fees and convoluted red tape as barriers to growth.

While not commenting on the specific departure of DCL, CLIA Australasia Managing Director Joel Katz told *Travel Daily* he had consistently warned that complex regulatory environments and high operating costs are putting the region at risk of losing cruise capacity to other markets.

"Demand for cruising remains strong internationally, however without action, we risk losing valuable tourism revenue, jobs, and investment to countries with more competitive conditions.

"There is an urgent need for globally competitive policy settings that provide certainty for long-term planning [that] recognises the enormous economic benefits that cruise delivers to secure the full potential of this vital sector of tourism," Katz added.

The industry will have the opportunity to hear from DCL's Vice President International Sales & Marketing, Jeff van Langeveld, who will be attending Cruise360 in Brisbane later this month. AB

## An extra Quest

**QUEST** Port Adelaide's second apartment hotel located at 10-12 North Parade has opened its doors, offering 88 new executive apartment-style hotel rooms.

Amenities include ground-level parking, a gym, laundry services, and a conference room that is approximately 80m<sup>2</sup> in size.

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## QF regional boost

**QANTAS** has granted nearly 50 community groups across regional Australia a share of \$2 million worth of funding, flight, and marketing support.

Part of the Qantas Regional Grants program, the recipients this year were MHA Care Moira Foodshare (Vic), STEM Changemakers (Qld), Tweed District Rescue Squad (NSW), Remote Op Shop (NT) and Sam's Spares Incorporated (WA).

## Royal slide shatters

**A PASSENGER** on Royal Caribbean's *Icon of the Seas* has received medical attention after the acrylic glass water slide he was travelling down broke and he fell through the gap.

A statement from the cruise line confirmed, "The water slide is closed for the remainder of the sailing pending an investigation" and that a passenger had been treated for his injuries.

## Global Travel takes a village

**GLOBAL** Travel Co has made its second acquisition, taking control of Balmain travel agency Global Village Travel to open a new operational chapter for the well-known Sydney agency.

The outlet, which has operated on Darling Street for 30 years, will now be known as Global Village Travel - Part of Global Travel Co.

The move follows a rebrand earlier this year of the former Globetrotters Travel and Cruise in Toowoomba (**TD** 04 Jun), which is now known as Global Travel Co.

Former owner Heidi Kervinen will remain employed with the business, with Global Travel Co Director Ben Apsey stating she will continue "to serve her loyal clients with the same warmth, knowledge, and dedication that has defined Global Village Travel for decades".

The only change to operations will be a relocation to 328 Darling Street in Balmain, a site once



occupied by Harvey World Travel.

"Heidi is one of the most respected advisors in the industry," said Apsey, **pictured** above at the store's new location. "She knows every face on Darling Street, and nearly everyone knows her - we're here to continue growing the brand she's built - not to replace it."

Apsey added that through its new operational support, Global Village will see new systems, technology and support structures introduced, allowing Kervinen to apply her full focus on creating memorable travel experiences without the stress of running a business. **ML**

## Tokyo goes large

**TOKYO** Tourism sent its biggest-ever delegation to Australia last week for trade events across Sydney and Melbourne.

Led by the Tokyo Metropolitan Govt's Senior Director - Tourism Division, Nobuhiko Emura, the 20-strong group featured representatives from the city's hotels, tour operators, cultural attractions, guiding services, transportation, and retail.

The suppliers met with Australian travel professionals through a series of face-to-face meetings, product updates, and cultural experiences.

The events come at a time when demand for Japan continues to soar among Australian travellers.



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## Accor lifts loyalty appeal

**ACCOR** has announced a rebrand of its loyalty subscription program in the Asia-Pacific region, with Accor Plus members to transition to a new format under ALL Accor+ Explorer.

From 01 Oct 2025, existing members will automatically be upgraded to the new subscription, which will include guaranteed ALL Accor Gold



status or higher within Accor's global loyalty program, two complimentary nights per year, and wider global discounts.

Members can also enjoy hotel stays at up to 50% off under the Red Hot Rooms offer, and a 15% discount off public rates at over 4,500 hotels worldwide under more than 30 brands.

Dining discounts include 30% off food and 15% off drinks at more than 1,600 restaurants and 1,200 bars across the region.

The membership program overhaul was based on feedback collected from more than 7,000 members and 200 hotels across 12 countries in Oct 2024. *JM*

## Aqua to east Africa

**AQUA** Expeditions has unveiled its sixth vessel, *Aqua Lares*.

The ship marks the cruise line's expansion into east Africa, offering voyages to biodiversity hotspots in the Seychelles, Aldabra, Zanzibar, and more.

*Lares*, which launches in Feb, will carry 30 passengers in just 15 suites, offering a 1:1 crew-to-guest ratio, cuisine by world-renowned chefs, and expert-led excursions in small groups.

## Spencer becomes a legend



**MANAGING** Director of Spencer Travel and founder of the TIME mentoring program, Penny Spencer, was honoured at the 25th annual bTB gala dinner held in Sydney last week.

Spencer took home the first Legendary Contribution to Travel award, which was supported by nominations from corporate travel buyers and suppliers.

Traditionally, two 'Legendary' awards are presented each year: Legendary Travel Buyer and Legendary Travel Supplier.

Spencer's award marks the first time in the event's history that a third category has been awarded.

"I was deeply moved by this recognition," Spencer said.

"TIME is very close to my heart

- it began as a simple desire to give back and has grown into something truly special.

"I am proud of every mentor, every mentee, and the community we've built together."

Spencer has been in the travel industry for almost 40 years, and founded the TIME mentoring program 16 years ago.

Recently, Spencer announced the sale of the corporate division of Spencer Travel to Lodgeline in a move that was part of a broader strategic restructure (*TD* 17 Jul).

At the time, Spencer said: "After 26 incredible years, I have chosen to transition the corporate division to a trusted partner who shares our values and commitment to service." *DF*

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## Advisors taste the Douro with Viking

**VIKING** recently hosted a group of travel advisors and their companions on a spectacular journey on Portugal's Douro river aboard *Viking Torgil*. The 10-day itinerary showcased the region's beautiful scenery, rich history, and renowned wine culture.

Agents explored charming towns like Regua, Pinhao, Favaio, and Salamanca in Spain on a day trip. They also visited historic quintas, and enjoyed private port tastings along the way. A highlight of the trip was an

exceptional dinner at Graham's Port Lodge in Vila Nova de Gaia, where the group savoured local cuisine paired with world-class port wines. The experience offered a true taste of the Douro 'The Viking Way', leaving advisors inspired by the region's beauty and the seamless luxury of the line's river cruising experience.



**AGENTS** getting into the spirit during the lively onboard Flamenco show.



**DAY** tour to Favaio, featuring a visit to one of the town's co-op Muscatel wineries.

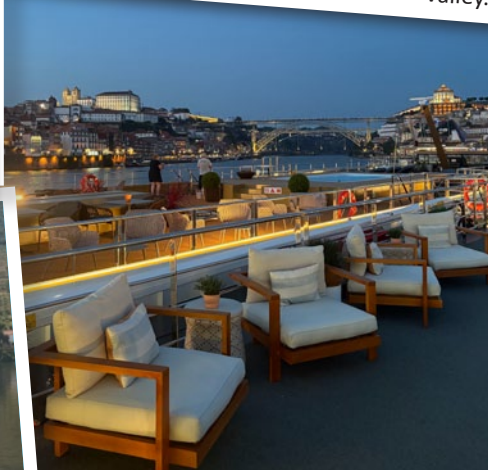


**VIKING Torgil.**

**LISBON, Portugal.**



**VIEWS** from the sun deck of *Viking Torgil*: Porto glowing at sunset and the Douro River Valley.



**SAMPLING** port during the popular 'Graham's Port Dinner' shore excursion are Kelly Meaker, Clean Cruising; and Rebecca Moss, House of Travel Whangarei; with Janine & Paul Keenan, ittravel Griffith.



**GOLDEN** hour in Porto.



**KELLY** Ross, RAA Mount Barker and Nathalie Fagan, Viking, enjoying lunch at Quinta Avesada.

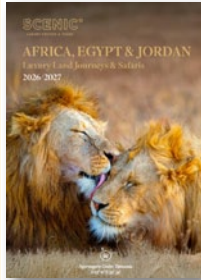


**ONBOARD** cooking demonstration of pastel de nata (Portuguese tarts).



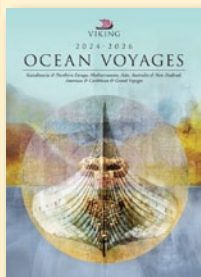
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### Scenic - Africa, Egypt and Jordan 2026/27

Packed with captivating included excursions and Scenic Enrich activities, the latest guide from Scenic features 13 carefully compiled itineraries. African journeys set off from Cape Town, Nairobi, Johannesburg and Victoria Falls, with Egypt and Jordan departures from Cairo and Amman. Explore for as little as nine days or take a fully immersive holiday of up to 38 days and explore it all. Itineraries feature plenty of opportunities to go on safari, cruise the Nile, see the pyramids and more.



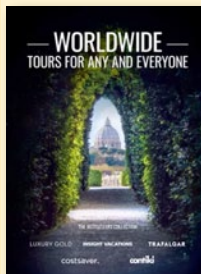
### Viking - 2026 Ocean Voyages

With ships 'built for discovery' and positioned all over the world, inclusions in Viking's latest guide are comprehensive to say the least. Across more than 200 pages, voyages are broken down by region, with more than a dozen options in the Med and Scandinavia each. The guide offers details on the Viking experience including a stateroom guide, deck plans, voyage inclusions and service details, along with pre- and post-cruise extensions.



### Driveaway - USA Road Trip Planner

Hit the highways in the USA with this essential guide to an American driving holiday. Beginning with the Ultimate Route 66 drive trip, the guide also features tips for exploring the California coast, the mighty south, the excitement of Orlando and even the cooler climate in Alaska. Approximate driving distances and times between major centres are included with answers to frequently asked questions to get the most while behind the wheel.



### Trafalgar - Worldwide Bestseller Collection

Details on a massive 240 itineraries have been packed into Trafalgar's latest Worldwide brochure, along with plenty of inspiration for the undecided. Latest additions include South Korea and Tanzania along with more than a dozen new tours in Sri Lanka, Japan and the villages of France, plus the awe-inspiring fjords of Scandinavia and jungles of Costa Rica. Plus, the most exciting additions are Trafalgar's new river cruise itineraries, which will explore the Danube to create an all-new way to see Europe.



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## Small changes can be big



**FINE-TUNING** key elements such as confirmations and communications around hard-to-find, high-end luxury products and experiences will be one focus for Abercrombie & Kent Travel Group's new Advisory Board, according to Melinda Gregor from Gregor & Lewis Bespoke Travel.

Unveiled last week (**TD** 08 Aug), the board's Asia Pacific members will include Gregor, along with Goldman Travel Group's Anthony Goldman and Singapore's Chervin Chow from Blue Sky Escapes.

More than 40 years of luxury travel will see Gregor work to unify the agent community in support of the tour operator's inventory management.

"[We'll be sharing] what issues we might have in Australia, perhaps with their reservations, maybe with their documentation, with their online booking screens, their websites, and it is just about giving feedback," Gregor said.

"Maybe we've got suggestions on what we think could be done better, and then listen to them when they say 'it's done this way because of this' and give us information we can use."

Gregor said it was fantastic AKTG was recognising the growing volume of sales coming from outside the US and how they can work better with agents providing more business out of Europe, Asia and Australia.

The first meeting for the new global board will take place in Oct in New York, which Gregor expects will see both parties outline what they want to achieve from the process.

Gregor acknowledged the amazing work AKTG has done in Australia under the tutelage of Debra Fox, Susan Haberle and Tony Archbold in transforming how A&K and Crystal Cruises interacts with travel agents.

"Their website has just recently changed and for me, A&K in Australia, their online booking system and confirmations needs to be a lot more streamlined and computerised and for response times to be better, and I know that is something they are working on and something that will be brought up," Gregor said.

"They're really trying to come to our market with new ideas and new things." **ML**

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\*Terms and conditions apply. The exclusive incentive is open to active travel advisors in Australia, and we reserve the right to alter the prize. The promotion is only available to active travel advisors, who book and deposit APT and Travelmarvel tours including Canada during the campaign period, 17 July to 14 August 2025. The prize will be awarded to the travel advisor who makes the highest number of bookings. In the instance that more than one adviser books the same number of tours, the prize will be awarded to the highest revenue value. The prize consists of: Air Canada Economy Flights from Sydney or Brisbane, for two people. Rocky Mountaineer GoldLeaf Service for two people including breakfast and lunch. Accommodation at Fairmont Waterfront, Vancouver for two nights including parking and daily breakfast and accommodation and Fairmont Banff Springs for three nights including parking and daily breakfast. Prize components can be used in conjunction or separately based on availability. Blackout dates apply and will be confirmed by individual suppliers. The prize is based on double occupancy; additional occupancy charges may apply. This prize is not redeemable for cash and is nontransferable. Travel insurance, incidentals, and transport other than international flights are the responsibility of the prize winner. The winner will be notified via email by 28 August 2025. The winner will have 7 days to accept the prize in writing. If the prize is not claimed within 7 days, the prize will be offered to the runner up. For any questions, email [inside.sales@aptravelgroup.com](mailto:inside.sales@aptravelgroup.com) or visit [www.atgconnect.com.au](http://www.atgconnect.com.au). Australian Pacific Touring Pty Ltd. ABN 44 004 684 619. ATIA accreditation #A10825. MULTI-809