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Travel Daily First with the news

Monday 18th August 2025



Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily has six pages of news, plus a front cover wrap from Inspiring Vacations, and full pages from:

- Hong Kong Airlines
- Luxury Escapes
- Italian Tourist Board

New way to fly HK

AUSSIES will be able to fly direct from Melbourne with Hong Kong Airlines from 13 Dec.

Find out more on page seven.

Earn a luxury escape

LUXURY Escapes is offering agents \$2,000 towards their next holiday when they book its new private jet charter tour - see p8.

Learn all about Italy

AGENTS can brush up on their knowledge of Italy by completing the Travel to Italy Academy - find out more on the back page.

AC directs agent traffic

AS THE local sales team for Air Canada battles a high volume of enquiries regarding flight cancellations, travel advisors are being encouraged to first review its range of goodwill and disruption policies HERE.

The plea follows Air Canada and Air Canada Rouge having to suspend restart plans after the union representing 10,000 of its flight attendants said it would defy a return to work order mandated by the Canadian Govt. While normal scheduling was

Solomon searches

SOLOMON Airlines has started actively recruiting for a new CEO after Sean Teo stepped down from the position in Jun.

While the carrier said it would name a successor by this month, it has posted a new job ad on LinkedIn today in the search for its new leader.



meant to resume by yesterday evening Canada time, Air Canada is now targeting a Mon evening local resumption time.

Approximately 240 flights have been axed as a result, a major portion of the 700 flights per day the carrier typically operates.

Customers whose flights are cancelled will be notified, and are strongly advised not to go to the airport unless they have flights confirmed with other airlines.

Commenting on the latest development, Air Canada said the union is guilty of illegally directing its members to defy the Canadian Industrial Relations Board.

Air Canada Express flights operated by Jazz or PAL continue to operate as normal. AB

Russom's new gig

DANIELLE Russom has revealed her next career move, taking up the role of MD and Senior VP Australia and Singapore for BCD Travel (TD breaking news).

The high-profile travel executive and former ATIA board member jumps ship from BCD Travel rival American Express Global Business Travel, where Russom had risen to become Vice President of SME for the Asia Pacific region.

It was revealed in Jun that Russom would no longer be able to serve on the ATIA board as she transitioned to a new position.

She was appointed to ATIA's Vice Chair role in 2024 (TD 15 Oct 2024) after CTM's Laura Ruffles stepped away for health reasons.

See Japan in bloom

TRAVELLERS can save up to 30% off Inspiring Vacations' Japan itineraries, including a 14-day tour during cherry blossom season - see the cover page.

2027-2028 SEASON NOW OPEN **OCEAN & EXPEDITION VOYAGES**

To celebrate the launch, we're offering a new expedition itinerary and special fares on select Quiet Season Mediterranean sailings in Q4 2027 and Q1 2028. With 15-day journeys from \$8,195 per person, your clients can save up to \$10,600 per couple compared with the same sailings in 2026. Hurry, these fares are for a limited time.



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EVT makes third-party play

AUSTRALIAN hospitality and leisure company EVT has acquired Pro-invest Hotels (PIH), with the move precipitating the launch of a third-party brand management model called EVT Connect Hospitality (TD breaking news).

The new offering will form part of the EVT's travel division, and will seek to deliver management solutions to hotel owners wanting to franchise a third-party brand.

Mathew Duff has been named to lead the new division as part of his current role as Group Director of Commercial, and the platform will be supported by PIH's existing long-term management deals under third-party brands.

"The launch of EVT Connect Hospitality - seeded by the acquisition of PIH - represents a further initiative to grow hotel earnings," EVT Chief Executive Officer Jane Hastings said.

"EVT Connect Hospitality will enhance [our] ability to deliver



value for asset owners who seek to franchise a third-party brand, supported by the expertise of the PIH team and now boosted by the ability to leverage our extensive EVT group expertise," she added.

EVT has been vocal about its hotel growth ambitions in recent years, which it is currently pursuing through a combination of ownership, new segment expansion, and asset-light management options.

The acquisition is subject to informal clearance from the ACCC and the satisfaction of certain procedural conditions, AB



QF on island time

QANTASLINK will commence flights to Christmas Island and Cocos (Keeling) Islands for the first time from 03 Nov.

Available for booking from today, the new five-hour services from Perth will operate twice weekly, and will support fledgling tourism demand for the Aussie territories in the Indian Ocean, as well as provide key government and freight transport.

Major drawcards for leisure tourists to the islands include the annual red crab migration, treks through the Christmas Island National Park, and coral diving.

"We look forward to supporting these island communities and helping maintain their vital connection to mainland Australia," QantasLink CEO Rachel Yangoyan said.



ET phones our home

ELLERTON & Co has been selected to handle the PR strategy for African carrier Ethiopian Airlines, marking the first time the brand has appointed a specialist for the local market.

The decision follows a mooted plan by Ethiopian Airlines to fly directly to Australia, flagged first by TD last month (TD 08 Jul).

While the announcement made no further mention of Aussie flights, the agency said it will be charged with "sharing the spirit" of Ethiopia with Australia, as the carrier ramps up fleet investment.

It was recently revealed that ET is on the hunt to buy either A350s or B787s as it explores expanding its flights to Australia.

The news also coincides with the airline's parent company signing a deal with the African Development Bank to build a "mega airport" in Bishoftu, billed as the continent's most ambitious airport project to date and one that will redefine African travel.







Shellharbour tees off

SHELLHARBOUR City Council in NSW is looking for developers to build a new 140-room hotel next to The Links Golf Course, located 300 metres from the upcoming Shellharbour Hospital.

Located on a 6,736m² site on council land, the venue will likely include a restaurant and bar, meeting and event spaces, a wellness and gym area, as well as a carpark and other facilities.

Submissions are now open for stakeholders until 23 Sep.

"Shellharbour has a lot to offer, from our marina, world-class golf course and our beautiful natural spaces," Mayor Chris Homer said.

bring more visitors, boost local opportunities."

The hotel will open in 2028.



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IATA error causes angst

EXCLUSIVE

AN ERROR made last week by the International Air Transport Association (IATA) resulted in a 15-hour temporary suspension of Etraveli Group's ticketing authorities, the air ticketing company has confirmed.

Etraveli stressed the mistake which claimed the company was in default - was outside of its control, and contrary to online rumours, its financial position remains robust and secure.

"We are in a very strong financial position and for the last 10 years had a CAGR of 27% with an EBITDA margin of 20% for all years except the COVID years," an email to its partners stated.

"We are proud to handle close to 100,000 bookings a day on average, which corresponds to several hundred thousand

Qantas fined \$90m

QANTAS has been fined \$90 million for illegally sacking workers during the pandemic, shy of the maximum \$120 million sought by the Transport Workers Union (TWU) (TD breaking news).

The Federal Court's Justice Michael Lee said \$50 million of the penalty should be paid directly to the TWU.

Responding to the judgement, the TWU said it marked the end of its "David and Goliath five-year battle", adding it vindicates its protracted legal fight with QF.



flight tickets sold on our brands and through our long-term partnership with Booking.com."

IATA mistakenly issued the default notice after a payment notification of around \$1,700 was sent to an incorrect contact.

"Etraveli is working tirelessly in close collaboration with IATA to rectify all consequences of this administrative situation as quickly as possible," the company said.

"We have also asked for a meeting with Willie Walsh. Director General IATA to get assurances that procedures will be improved to ensure that such an event with such extreme consequences never happens again, especially for larger global retailers in the IATA GoGlobal program," Etraveli added. AB

Walsh top of the tree

ATLANTIS Dubai has promoted Dean Walsh to Executive Director of Sales, which will see him lead global leisure market growth for both Atlantis The Palm and Atlantis The Royal.

Since joining the resort in 2023 as Director of Sales, Walsh has played a key role in boosting Atlantis Dubai's market presence across Australasia, Europe and the United Kingdom.



Velocity on point

VELOCITY Frequent Flyer's 1 Point Rewards pop-up stores are making a comeback in Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane for one day only in each city.

At each physical space including Pitt St in Sydney members have the opportunity to exchange one Velocity point for a range of premium items, from Virgin Australia flights and lounge access, to high-end beauty and technology products.

Members are invited to take part in a mystery carousel and claw machines, or scan the Myer shelves to claim their rewards, while a live DJ keeps the beats pumping and Virgin Australia crew guide attendees.

The Sydney pop-up event will take place on 22 Aug, with other dates/venues to be announced.



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Raffles Sentosa Singapore the place to be

EXCLUSIVE

THE newly opened all-villa luxury Raffles Sentosa Singapore has already proven itself to be a major winner with events planners, hosting several corporate buys-out so far this year.

Speaking with *Travel Daily*, the property's Cluster General Manager, Cavaliere Giovanni Viterale (**pictured**), said that in addition to a number of highprofile weddings, luxury brands such as Krug Champagne, Hermes, and A. Lange & Sohne have chosen the property to host marquee gatherings.



"In the past six months, our events team has proven that when it comes to luxury, Raffles Sentosa Singapore is a perfect venue - providing a truly memorable setting for events, celebrations, meetings and gatherings," Viterale said.

"Our guests have experienced true Raffles-style hospitality from the gracious sense of arrival, expert event management, holistic wellness and gastronomy inspired by our heritage and global traditions, tailored to each special occasion," he added.

While the past six months have demonstrated early bookings success, Viterale believes even greater success lies ahead.

"Forward bookings throughout the rest of 2025 and into 2026 remain very strong from both leisure and corporate guests alike," he noted.

"Singapore is a city that prides itself on hosting world-class events throughout the year." AB

50% platforms in breach

A NEW study has revealed that half of travel companies have staff who are reusing previously breached passwords, putting millions of users at risk.

The analysis from Business Digital Index (BDI) examined the cybersecurity of 20 major travel and tourism platforms, and found that just two were secure enough to receive a top grade of 'A'.

Trip.com and Flightradar24 were the only ones to receive nearperfect scores, while Skyscanner was found to have the worst website security, earning it an 'F', alongside Wetter.com, Hilton, and Marriott International.

BDI also found that 18 out of the 20 travel platforms had employee credentials that were circulating on the dark web from past data breaches, with



a significant portion of those employees found to still be using the same password.

In fact, for Skyscanner alone, researchers discovered 989 leaked credentials that are still accessible and 24 critical or highrisk vulnerabilities.

Marriott International and Hilton both scored 66 out of 100, with tens of thousands of employee credentials from previous breaches still circulating on the black market. *JM*

Exploring Greece

GREECE'S helicopter airline operator Hoper has added a slew of updates to its services.

Holidaymakers are now able to travel from Athens to Costa Navarino in 45 minutes, with flights starting from €636.

In addition, Hoper is now offering private charters across Greece, including Paros, Naxos, Thessaloniki, Crete (Chania, Elounda, Herkalion), Corfu, Ikaria or Meteora in Kalabaka.

Hoper has also recently partnered with booking platform Ferryhopper to help tourists create multi-stop itineraries.

Cebu holiday boost

CEBU Pacific will add a fifth weekly flight to its Manila Melbourne route from 12 Dec, using A330-900neo aircraft.

The change will be seasonal and follows the carrier also scheduling plans to increase Manila-Perth services from three to six times a week between 17-22 Dec 2025, and 04-12 Jan 2026.

Cebu Pacific will also upgauge its route to Brisbane over the holiday period, adding a 309-seater A330-300 on selected dates throughout Dec and Jan to replace A321LR planes.

Viking sails the world

VIKING has unveiled its 2027-2028 World Cruise itineraries, featuring four voyages that will visit dozens of countries across six continents.

The lineup includes the 'Viking World Cruise', departing from Fort Lauderdale on 28 Dec 2027 on board *Viking Viesta*, which will visit 31 countries in 142 days, with 62 guided tours and overnight stays in 16 cities, before ending in London on 18 May 2028.

Guests can extend their journey with the 170-day 'Viking World Voyage III', which continues from London and includes 21 additional ports of call across Northern Europe and Scandinavia, before concluding in Stockholm.

Viking also offers the 153-day 'Viking World Voyage IV' from LA to Stockholm, and a 125-day 'Viking World Discoveries' cruise from LA to London.







Win a Memphis trip

AUSTRALIAN and New Zealand travel advisors can win a trip to Memphis and Nashville in May next year, thanks to a new incentive from Globus, Memphis Tourism and United Airlines.

From today until 14 Sep, travel advisors who book and deposit any USA or Canada Globus or Cosmos tour will go in the draw to win a spot on a Globus' Music Cities: Nashville & Memphis tour.

Trips will go to the five top sellers, but there are also five wildcard spots up for grabs by anyone who books and deposits a tour, with a bonus entry for flights booked with United Airines - learn more **HERE**.

LTC new members

TWO agencies have joined Luxury Travel Collection: Global Jetsetting and The Travel Project. While Global Jetsetting has always been proud of its independent nature, MD Marissa Titmarsh said she is excited to collaborate with LTC, in crafting "one-of-a-kind journeys".

Meanwhile, The Travel Project has joined LTC's Affiliate Membership, gaining access to its portfolio of resources, exclusive events and global partnerships, while maintaining their existing affiliation with Link Travel Group.

According to Matt Coyle, founder of The Travel Project, the partnership helps the agency continue to evolve and create "impossible-to-book experiences" for their customers.

Travel Daily

A million-dollar lunch



A HANDFUL of travel industry professionals attended philanthropic event The Million Dollar Lunch at the Crown in Melbourne last week.

Now in its 20th year, the event has played a major role in supporting the Children's Cancer Council Foundation to fund transformative research, improve clinical care, and offer family support programs.

Over the years, The Million Dollar Lunch has raised over \$29 million.

Held at the Palladium at the Crown on Fri, attendees included Group CEO Ram Chhabra and Group COO Nidji Nijhawan from CVFR Travel Group; Virgin Australia's General Manager Sales Darren McDermott; and Justin Kestel, Qatar Airways' Regional Manager for Australia and New Zealand.

This year, The Million Dollar Lunch was hosted by sports

broadcaster Hamish McLachlan.

"What an amazing lunch where all guests and sponsors together raised over \$2.7 million in one afternoon," enthused Chhabra in a LinkedIn post. JHM

Qatar kicks on

QATAR Airways has partnered with the Sydney Swans to launch a competition, offering a unique experience for sports enthusiasts.

The winner and their guest will travel in Business Class with QR to Europe, where they will watch a game from the VIP section at either a Paris Saint-Germain or Inter Milan home match, in addition to enjoying three nights' accommodation and a two-night luxury stopover in Doha.

To enter, guests need to complete the official competition entry form and verify their email address - entries are open now until 03 Oct.



A LOT has gone down in airplane loos - literally and figuratively - and according to new research from scientists, these lavatories could now hold the key to the global spread of antimicrobial resistant (AMR) superbugs, described as "a silent pandemic" that threatens to kill more than 39 million people by 2050.

CSIRO partnered with Xiamen University, the University of South Australia and Michigan Technological University to analyse the wastewater found in 44 international flights that arrived in Australia.

Nine pathogens and superbugs were detected, including some that are acquired in hospitals and resistant to multiple drugs.

The findings suggest that aircraft wastewater is a viable tool for monitoring the AMR superbugs.

Tuberculosis, influenza and SARS-CoV-2 have all been known to spread via air travel.



page 5



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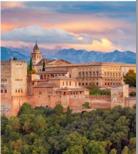
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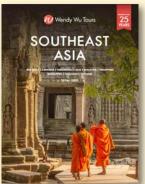




Ormina Tours - Europe 2026/27

Clients can discover the art of European travel with Ormina Tours' 2026/27 brochure, featuring an inspiring mix of new destinations and timeless favourites. Journey through hidden corners and muchloved regions such as Puglia and Sicily, and be among the first to experience the operator's new small group journeys in Spain, Northern Ireland, Sardinia, and the Italian Riviera. The newly launched Port Series is set to enhance clients' European river and ocean cruises with tailorable land packages across numerous European

ports. Order the brochure for free, HERE.



Wendy Wu Tours - Southeast Asia 2026/27 Wendy Wu Tours' Southest Asia brochure for 2026/27 is now available HERE. Within its pages, clients will learn about four new itineraries in the region. Among the fresh lineup is 'Wonders of Indonesia', for travellers who want to venture beyond the typical tourist trail. For those drawn to river cruising, 'Angkor & Mekong Uncovered' includes a three-night journey aboard the Victoria Mekong. Visitors can also enjoy a festive twist with 'Christmas on the Mekong', a new 20-day tour featuring

Vietnam and Cambodia including a seven-night cruise on the Mekong.



Entire Travel Group - Barge Journeys 2026
Entire Travel Group has relaunched its barge cruising program with the release of the 2026
Entire Barge Journeys brochure - the first dedicated edition since 2019 (see HERE).
The 60-page guide features a collection of all-inclusive canal cruises across Europe, tailored for couples, solo travellers, small groups and private charters. Readers can learn about floating hotels accommodating between two and 22 guests, offering a relaxed way to explore France, Italy, the UK and beyond. Profiles on each barge journey

include detailed itineraries, vessel descriptions, maps, and inclusions.



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Global Linkd team links up



THE entire global Linkd Tourism team gathered in Sydney last week for the travel representation company's biannual planning retreat.

The three-day event focused on aligning the team's strategy, capabilities and vision for the year ahead, featuring speaker sessions and industry insights.

A healthy dose of fun was mixed in too, with attendees engaging in friendly competition at BattleKart Moore Park, and indulging in fine dining at Sydney's acclaimed Malaya restaurant.

The Linkd team, which has now reached 20 members, included new senior team members Emma Prineas, Director, PR & Communications, and Phil Haines, Director, Brand & Growth.

"This is one of my favourite times of the year with our team, where we come together, learn, share ideas, and work collectively to improve how we deliver incredible results for our clients always," said Linkd Managing Director Kylee Kay.

Earlier this month, Linkd

Tourism was appointed to represent the Great American West in Australia and New Zealand (*TD* 12 Aug). *JM*

Star godmother flip

ROYAL Caribbean has announced a new godmother for its new Icon-class ship, *Star of the Seas*, after US singer Diana Ross stepped back from the honorary title just three days before the naming ceremony (*TD* 15 Aug).

Research astronaut Kellie Gerardi (pictured) will take on the role, joining the maritime tradition of blessing the ship this Wed in Port Canaveral. Florida.

Gerardi, who is known for her groundbreaking work in bioastronautics and STEM advocacy, as well as her social media presence, was the 90th woman in history to fly to space.



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