

## Today's issue of TD

*Travel Daily* today features five pages of news, plus a full page from **Inspiring Vacations**.

## McAlpine imagines

**FORMER** Cunard commercial chief Katrina McAlpine has been appointed Director for B2B Sales at Imagine Cruising.

"Katrina's appointment marks an important step in the evolution of our trade strategy... [and will] further strengthen our support for agents and broaden our bespoke product range," MD Alex Sirman said.

McAlpine departed Cunard in Apr (**TD** 07 Jan) after more than 13 years with the cruise line.

## HKTB recruits PR

**THE HONG** Kong Tourism Board (HKTB) has appointed Cindy Gilbert (**pictured**) as Senior Manager, Marketing & Public Relations for Australia, New Zealand, and the South Pacific.

Based in the Sydney office, Gilbert will report to Director for ANZ and South Pacific, Karen Macmillan, where she will lead PR efforts to further lift the Asian market's profile with Aussies.

Her career has included roles at Emirates, Royal Caribbean, and CAPA (Centre for Aviation).



## APT brings UK in line

**APT** and Travelmarvel have formally de-merged to become two standalone brands in the United Kingdom, bringing it in line with every other market around the globe.

As is the case in Australia and New Zealand, the APT Luxury Travel and Travelmarvel UK brands will seek to improve market propositions with travellers by uncoupling.

The Melbourne-headquartered company has also confirmed that Travelmarvel UK will introduce a refreshed brand identity to support its emergence as a standalone entity, in a bid to better appeal to premium travellers with curated touring and river cruising experiences.

A new website with refreshed visual branding is now live in the



United Kingdom as well.

A spokesperson for APT stressed to **TD** that the UK announcement will not change the way local guests experience Travelmarvel across all regions, adding "the same premium journeys, value, and service remain at the heart of every experience".

APT believes the separation will allow Travelmarvel to focus on offering premium flexible travel, while APT Luxury will target fully inclusive experiences.

"The market is shifting, and we are determined to meet evolving traveller expectations with the launch of Travelmarvel as a standalone entity," APT UK and Europe MD Paul Melinis said. **AB**

## KL airspace closure

**MALAYSIA** Airlines will reschedule flight times from tomorrow through to 31 Aug due to temporary airspace closures around KL Int'l Airport (KLIA).

The reason for the closure is to accommodate Malaysia's 68th Merdeka celebration, which will see commercial flights restricted from 8am to noon local time every day during the period.

Passengers departing from KLIA are advised to arrive at the airport four hours ahead of their rescheduled departure times to allow sufficient time for check-in procedures & document checks.

## Discount deadline

**THE** time to score 25% off Inspiring Vacations tours is running out, with the promo ending on Wed - see **back page**.

## Qantas hits the flix

**HOYTS** Rewards members who link their Qantas loyalty account and watch films between now and 17 Aug, will go in the draw to win 100,000 QFF points.

## APT sales ops head

**HELEN** Clark has been appointed Head of Sales Operations at APT Travel Group.

The experienced travel executive was previously a senior trainer at Helloworld for two years, and before that was a relationship manager at Indigenous tourism company Red Earth for just over a year.

Clark will report to Chief Sales Officer Scott Ellis, who told **Travel Daily** he is "thrilled" to have the new recruit on board.



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\*Competition closes 11.59pm AEST 12 September 2025. Terms & Conditions apply.



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## ANA goes daily

**ALL** Nippon Airways (ANA) has boosted its commitment to Australia, confirming it will up frequencies on the Tokyo-Perth route from three times a week to daily from 01 Dec to 19 Apr 2026.

The decision to increase Aussie departures on a seasonal basis will add around 19,200 inbound seats to the country, and cater for the rising demand for Japanese travel, as well as the building appetite for Japanese tourists to visit Western Australia.

ANA first introduced the Tokyo-Perth route in 2019, however the pandemic scuttled services until a resumption in Oct 2023.

Healthy demand saw the Japanese carrier make the route year-round from Mar this year.

The route is one of 20 non-stop flights from PER to key o/s cities.

## JB drives NZ expansion

**JOURNEY** Beyond has made its first acquisition outside of Australia, acquiring New Zealand coach touring brand Grand Pacific Tours for an undisclosed sum (**TD** breaking news).

The Kiwi business currently offers guests Ultimate Small Group Tours on its business class coaches, as well as Signature Mid-Size group tours, which give travellers premium economy trips on board custom-designed 32-seater coaches.

The acquisition will see founder Peter Harding remain with Grand Pacific Tours as Executive GM to ensure a smooth transition, with GM Stacia Morris and her team to join the Journey Beyond group.

"This marks an exciting next phase of growth for us, further expanding our offerings of immersive, authentic and unique tourism experiences into New Zealand," Journey Beyond CEO Chris Tallent said.

"Journey Beyond looks forward to building on the incredible work of Grand Pacific's founder Peter Harding and his team in this breathtaking and experience-rich country, so get ready for an exciting new chapter in experiential travel...to discover New Zealand like never before."

The Kiwi brand has 230 fully-inclusive departures locked in for the season ahead, and will join Journey Beyond's experiential tourism portfolio in Sep.

In recent years, Journey Beyond



has demonstrated an acquisitive appetite for blue-chip tourism assets, part of a broader strategy to own more of the tourism ecosystem in Australia, and now also across the Tasman.

Most recently, the owners of The Ghan and Indian Pacific purchased Exmouth Dive & Whalesharks Ningaloo in WA (**TD** 25 Jul), and also inked a management deal to operate the five-star Monarto Safari Resort in South Australia (**TD** 23 Jan).

Journey Beyond has this year also firmed up its ability to source more American and Chinese guests, appointing representatives in each market (**TD** 07 Mar), (**TD** 13 Jun). **AB**

## JQ faces \$1.5m fine

**JETSTAR** is facing the prospect of a multi-million-dollar penalty in New Zealand after the Commerce Commission took the Qantas LCC to court over claims it misled Kiwis about compensation for delayed or cancelled flights (**TD** 19 Sep 2024).

A rep for Jetstar appeared in Auckland District Court late last week, where it apologised for "letting our New Zealand customers down during COVID".

## Swan agent benefits

**SWAN** Hellenic has launched a new group travel program that will offer Aussie travel advisors a range of extra perks and benefits.

Among the added value for agents is an additional commission of 2% to 4%, a reduced tour leader threshold, and no initial deposit required to hold group booking space.

Sellers will also now enjoy protected pricing that ensures group bookings are managed consistently across all Swan Hellenic channels, reducing the prospect of clients seeing lower rates elsewhere after committing to their bookings.

Meanwhile, guests will benefit from more flexible amenity points that deliver extras like onboard credit, private events, and a range of premium gifts.

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## CZ goes daily in Sydney

**CHINA** Southern Airlines has continued its aggressive Australian growth trajectory, announcing plans to ramp up its Guangzhou-Sydney route to the highest frequency ever operated.

The carrier will move its four-times-a-week services to daily from 13 Dec to 24 Feb 2026, equating to an extra 74 return flights and 44,000 more seats over the peak summer season.

China Southern will deploy B787-9 Dreamliners on all flights, configured with 28 business and 269 economy class seats.

The Chinese carrier has already made local headlines this month, announcing plans to go double daily between Guangzhou and Brisbane in summer between 15 Dec to 22 Feb 2026 (**TD** 19 Aug).

Sydney Airport hailed the latest development from CZ as testament to the Harbour City's rising reputation for being "Australia's gateway to China".



"These additional services will boost tourism and deliver new export opportunities for NSW businesses," SYD Group Executive Aviation Growth and Group Strategy, Greg Botham, said.

China Southern added that the additional frequencies will provide Aussies with greater schedule flexibility for leisure and business travel, as well as the ability to explore a wider range of destinations in China.

In the latest BITRE statistics for May 2025, China Southern increased its pax into Australia by 7.3% year-on-year to 72,556.

The news follows a squadron of Chinese carriers making moves on Australia, including Shenzhen Airlines, which makes its MEL debut in Dec (**TD** 11 Aug). **AB**

## Webjet AI initiatives

**WEBJET** Group has announced partnerships with AWS and Microsoft to drive AI-powered travel innovation.

The initiatives will see Webjet's customer service team introduce an AI agent with AWS, as well as a multi-modal travel planning agent with Microsoft.

These smart solutions are focused on delivering faster, more personalised travel to boost customer experience and operational efficiency.

"Through our partnerships with AWS and Microsoft, we are excited to work with some of the most innovative AI teams to solve challenges that matter to our customers and the travel industry," Webjet Chief Executive Officer & Managing Director Katrina Barry said.

"Technology and innovation have always been at Webjet's core, and we're inspired by the opportunity AI brings to further strengthen our capabilities."

## WA Minister at ACA

**WESTERN** Australia Minister for Tourism and the Great Southern, Reece Whitby, will open the Australian Cruise Association (ACA) annual conference in Fremantle, taking place in Sep.

Int'l guests speakers locked in include Holland America Line Director of Deployment and Itinerary, Robert Du Bruin; Princess Cruises Director of Deployment and Itinerary Planning, Debbie Holbrook; and Norwegian Cruise Line Holdings Vice President Destination Services, Christine Manjencic.

## Sinner jumps aboard

**ITALIAN** tennis ace Jannik Sinner has signed on to become Explora Journeys' new global brand ambassador.

The MSC Group premium brand said Sinner will appear in select brand campaigns and a series of exclusive onboard activations and wellness rituals with his team.

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## C360 in ship-shape

CLIA'S sold-out Cruise360 Australasia conference in Brisbane will be its largest gathering to date, with 850 delegates expected to converge on Brisbane this week.

Taking place on Wed and Thu, the event will include a keynote state of the industry address from CLIA Global's President & CEO Bud Darr, as well as presentations and interviews on the expanding luxury cruise sector, the fly-cruise market, emerging opportunities among Gen Z travellers, plus many more pressing topics.

Panel sessions on the schedule will also look to bust myths about river cruising, as well as what the most popular itinerary options have been over the last year.

A delegation representing *Travel Daily* and *Cruise Weekly* will be on the ground to report on all of the fun and exciting news from Brisbane, while our latter masthead will also produce a special edition - stay tuned.

## Hotels boost EVT profits

AUSTRALIAN hospitality and entertainment company EVT Limited has posted a close-to six-fold increase in reported net profit after tax to \$33.4 million for financial year 2025.

All EVT brands outperformed the market, according to its latest financial report, with the hotel



division leading the way with record revenue numbers.

The portfolio of hotels added \$4.7 million in EBITDA for the financial year 2025, posting just over \$106 million for the period.

Despite what EVT described as the "worst winter weather conditions in 20 years", its Thredbo property almost maintained 2024 performance.

The ski asset saw its EBITDA drop by 6.1% to \$18.47 million, while revenue managed to stay marginally above last year with a 1.5% gain to \$87.54 million.

Looking forward to FY2026, EVT said it expected Thredbo to record an EBITDA in the range of \$25-30 million - subject to any adverse weather conditions. AB

## New Samoan chief

THE Samoa Tourism Authority has appointed Niumata Kitona Pogi to be its CEO on a three-year term, moving across from his previous role as Manager of Research & Statistics.

An independent panel selected Pogi from seven candidates, with his experience in strategic planning in the tourism sector and budgeting skills earning him the promotion.

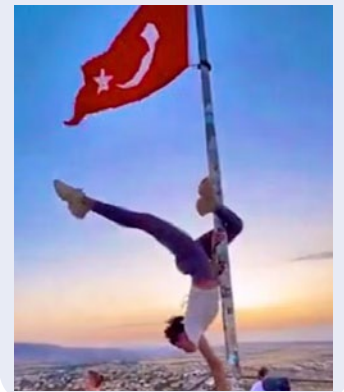
Samoa has flagged plans to form closer bonds with Aussie trade partners in recent years.



## Window Seat

A TOURIST who performed a pole dance on a Turkish flag in Cappadocia faces the prospect of jail time after local authorities spotted the video circulating on social media.

The unnamed woman is now the subject of a criminal investigation, with Turkish lawmakers labelling the dance a "heinous act".



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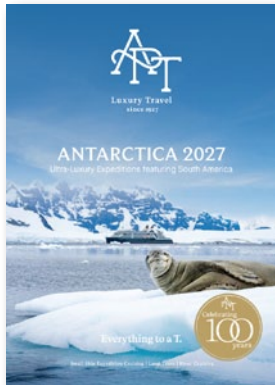
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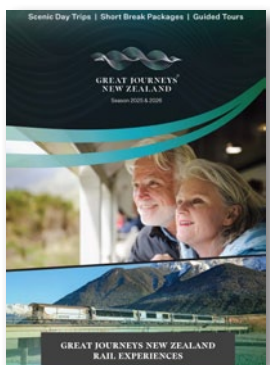
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**APT Travel Group - Antarctica 2027**  
APT has kicked off its centenary celebrations with a refreshed brochure look. The operator's 2027 Antarctica program spotlights the return of the exclusive 15-night Antarctic cruise aboard the ultra-luxury *Seabourn Venture*, offered across a range of itineraries that combine the White Continent with South American icons such as Machu Picchu, Iguazu Falls, the Amazon River, the Galapagos Islands and Chile's coastal treasures. Agents and their clients can read about APT's 100-year journey, find all the details of its Antarctica voyages, and discover special offers and benefits - [CLICK HERE](#).



**Bunnik Tours - Africa 2026**  
Travellers looking to explore Africa should check out the latest brochure from Bunnik Tours, which highlights its 2026 Africa offering, including classic itineraries encompassing Kenya and Tanzania; Kruger to Cape Town; Namibia, Botswana and Victoria Falls; and Cairo to Zanzibar. The digital guide also features a short tour in Madagascar, and independent travel trips in Rwanda and Kenya, as well as Chobe river cruises. Readers will also learn about the extensions on offer, including a train safari with Rovos Rail. To read the brochure, [CLICK HERE](#).



**Entire Travel Group - Barge Journeys 2026**  
The New Great Journeys New Zealand 2025/26 season brochure is now available at TIFS. The 28-page publication features GJNZ's three scenic railways, including a collection of its most popular independent rail holiday packages and brand-new guided rail tours, which offer a more inclusive group experience with a local tour director. For example, learn about the picturesque Coastal Pacific Rail Journey, which meanders along the Pacific coast between Picton and Christchurch. [CLICK](#)

[HERE](#) to access the brochure online.

## Explore more of Nth America



**COSMOS** has unveiled its new range of North American tours for 2026, offering budget-friendly options that dive into the region's landscapes, music and history.

There are three brand-new itineraries for 2026, including the 11-day 'Music & Legends with Elvis & Dolly', which features the house where Elvis was born in Tupelo, Mississippi, as well as the hardware store where his mother bought his first guitar.

Guests will also visit Memphis, the home of the blues, and enjoy a tour of Graceland, before heading to Nashville and seeing the studio where Dolly Parton recorded some of her biggest hits.

Other offerings include a nine-day exploration of the Grand

Canyon and Utah, and the 10-day 'Untold Tales of Historic Trails', which brings America's history to life, beginning in Philadelphia and travelling through Delaware, Maryland, and more.

"These new North America holidays are packed with moments that matter - and priced to make the most of them," said Chris Hall, Managing Director Asia Pacific, Globus family of brands.

The North American tours start from \$307 a day - for more information, [CLICK HERE](#). *JM*

## Seabourn on stage

**SEABOURN'S** entertainment line-up has been announced for its 2026 World Cruise, departing 06 Jan 2026.

The 129-day journey will include performances from Grammy Award-winning and internationally-acclaimed artists, including ukulele virtuoso Jake Shimabukuro, Brazilian jazz guitarist Diego Figueiredo, *Hamilton* star Christine Allado and more.

The debut of *Being Mr Wickham* will take place on board, in addition to Broadway-style production *V for Variety*.

## Nauru-Suva flights

**NAURU** Airlines is launching flights to Suva from 28 Aug, adding to its weekly Nadi flights.

"Suva is a strategically important market, adding a second gateway to our Fiji operations will allow us to enhance regional connectivity and offer even greater passenger, ACMI and cargo opportunities to our customers," said Nauru Airlines CEO Robert Eoe.

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