



QF says more Manila

QANTAS has revealed plans to boost its network to Manila, with the carrier to increase its Brisbane-Manila service from four to five return flights per week beginning 27 Oct 2025.

Operated by the Flying Kangaroo's Airbus A330 aircraft, the expansion will add more than 25,000 seats annually between the two cities.

The carrier said it will also adjust flight times to enable more seamless connections.

HLO battles headwinds

HELLOWORLD'S agency and ticketing business declined in the 12 months to 30 Jun 2025, with CEO Andrew Burnes citing agency closures and transfers as one of the reasons (**TD** breaking news).

The agency group remained upbeat about reversing the trend, confirming 15 new stores are planned for opening next year.

"We remain committed to agency succession planning, with future ownership pathways and training programs in place to support the next generation of business leaders," HLO stated.

The company also believes its heavy investment in AI and digital solutions will improve agency and customer efficiency outcomes.

Meanwhile, Burnes stated that challenging economic conditions, a drop in average airfares, and



a trend towards short- and medium-haul travel had all impacted HLO's bottom line.

That challenging trading environment saw Helloworld's TTV decline from \$4.15 billion to \$3.8 billion, and total profit after tax slide by 7.3% to \$28.48m.

EBITDA from continuing operations held steady at \$60 million, however revenue also dipped by 8.7% to \$192.8 million.

Meanwhile, total cash held by the business dropped from \$161.9 million to \$79.4 million as at 30 June, with the decline attributed in part to its \$48.5 million share purchases in Webjet Group Limited during the year.

Other factors included an additional BSP payment of \$40 million and increased tax payments of \$19.2 million.

Looking ahead, Helloworld said it has strong forward bookings for the remainder of 2025 and well into 2026, while air bookings for next year remain 11% higher than the same time last year. **AB**

Get chills and thrills

AGENTS can now apply for Tourism New Zealand's Explore Programme to access more than 440 discounts to build their NZ self-famil - see **page 11**.

Get real, Solomons

TOURISM Solomons is highlighting the range of experiences on offer in the Solomon Islands, for travellers who are looking for a "real and raw" adventure - more on **p12**.



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Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today features 10 pages of news, including a photo page from **Uniworld** and our **Sustainability** page, plus a Product Profile from **Tourism Solomons**, and a full page from **Tourism New Zealand**.

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AMA WATERWAYS



FC makes it simpler

FLIGHT Centre Travel Group's corporate businesses have banded together to launch 'Trip Options', a new solution designed to simplify how travel managers arrange trips on behalf of travellers.

Developed in response to customer feedback, the trip planning tool gives travellers more visibility and choice, while adhering to policy.

With Trip Options, travel planners can build complete itineraries in minutes for both domestic and international journeys, as well as use the 'Send to Traveller' feature to involve travellers directly in the planning process.

"It makes life easier for business travel arrangers and smoother for travellers - no more back-and-forth emails, no screenshots, and no rogue bookings; just easy trip planning and faster approvals," said Melissa Elf, Global Chief Operating Officer for FCM Travel and Corporate Traveller.

New Links in the chain

LINK Travel Group has expanded its membership with two new agencies, Planet Blue Travel and Main Beach Travel.

Sydney-based corporate agency Planet Blue (**pictured**) specialises in SMEs, and will be welcomed into the group from next week.

"The Link board and I were immediately impressed by Planet Blue Travel, and their business principles and practices align with Link's core values," the group's GM Scott Darlow said.

"Planet Blue's highly ambitious nature is infectious, and we know that the sky is the limit for them, and we look forward to standing side by side with them as they grow," he added.

Meanwhile, Gold Coast-located Main Beach Travel will join Link from next month.

The luxury specialist was recently acquired by Goldman Group (**TD** 29 Jul), which is one of the founders of Link.



Both agencies will now have access to comprehensive technology, product, supply and business operations.

Link also confirmed both Spencer Group of Companies and Spencer Travel Holdings have remained members of the joint venture travel network.

Spencer Travel last month sold its corporate division to software company LodgeLink (**TD** 17 Jul).

The sale will see Spencer Travel now operate as two separate entities: Spencer Group of Companies (SGC) - Corporate Travel Division, and Spencer Travel Holdings (STH) - Leisure, Wellness, and Independent Contractor Model. *MS*

Xcel served up Torres

CELEBRITY Cruises has announced World's Best Female Chef 2024, Janaina Torres, as godmother of its new ship *Celebrity Xcel*, which launches this Nov (**TD** 08 Nov 2023).

Recognised for her innovative and no-waste approach to cooking, Torres is co-owner of the award-winning restaurant A Casa do Porco in Sao Paulo and is considered a trailblazer in Brazil's culinary scene.

Torres (**pictured**) will christen *Celebrity Xcel* on 16 Nov, before the Edge-class ship sets sail on her inaugural season from Fort Lauderdale, offering seven-night cruises to Mexico and more.



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Renfe, AVE	—————>	Comfort Premium

Book with Rail Europe

WebBeds chasing records

WEB Travel Group is on track for a record year, with the first six months of 2026 seeing total transaction value on track to be at least \$3.1 billion, a new trading update released today has shown.

Bookings for the B2B WebBeds business are also expected to be up by 15-19% when compared to the same period last year.

FY26 TTV margins remain on track to be at least 6.5%, the update noted, with the margin to improve in the second half.

"WebBeds continues to outperform its peers," MD John Guscic (**pictured**) said during a presentation this morning.

"We are seeing strong growth continuing to come through in the Americas, as well as Asia Pacific and Europe," he added.

It was not all good news for Web Travel Group though, with the update confirming that for a two-week period in Jun, the business saw a material increase



in cancellations globally due to the Israel-Iran conflict.

Trading has since picked up in other regions, however the Middle East continues to see ongoing weakness.

Guscic also highlighted that WebBeds continues to gain market share from regional and fragmented smaller B2B providers, and with TTV margins remaining stable, the company is on track to deliver record EBITDA in financial year 2026.

In the longer term, Web Travel Group said it is looking to hit \$10 billion in TTV by 2030. **AB**

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Surcharge ban on the agenda at Pulse

DURING its upcoming Pulse meetings, the Australian Travel Industry Association (ATIA) will shine a spotlight on the Reserve Bank of Australia's proposed debit/credit card surcharge ban (**TD 22 Jan**).

Taking place over the next fortnight, the meetings give members the opportunity to provide feedback as well as receive briefings on ATIA advocacy on key issues confronting the industry.

In addition to the card surcharge ban, ATIA will explore the impact of artificial intelligence on the future of work in the travel industry, and update members on its continued advocacy on the proposed Aviation Industry Ombudsman Scheme.

The Pulse meetings kick off this Fri, with a session for independent agencies to take place at 11am AEST.

MEL's third begins

INITIAL construction work will commence this month on Melbourne Airport's third runway, which is scheduled to open in 2031 (**TD 13 Sep 2024**).

The works will take around 12 months to complete, including road widening and the installation of a temporary intersection and traffic lights at the north of the airport between the Wildwood Rd and Oaklands Rd roundabouts.

At the same time, community engagement has begun with residents in the Hume and Brimbank local government areas for development of the Third Runway Noise Amelioration Plan.

CTM asks for time

CTM has changed the date of release of its FY25 accounts to 25 Sep, after auditors noted possible adjustments required relating to the timing of the recognition of certain revenues and costs.

Extra help has been sought.

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Huge Boeing order

KOREAN Air has announced its intention to purchase 103 next-generation aircraft from Boeing, 19 spare engines from GE Aerospace and CFM International, and an engine maintenance program with GE Aerospace.

The massive Boeing order will cost the Asian carrier around A\$56 billion, and includes 20 Boeing 777-9s, 25 Boeing 787-10s, 50 Boeing 737-10s, and eight Boeing 777-8F freighters.

Aircraft will be delivered as part of a phased approach through to the end of 2030, and is a strategic proactive measure to support Korean Air's long-term growth following its integration with Asiana Airlines.



AW lands on cruise deal

ADVENTURE World is now an executive partner of Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA), as it supports agents by offering customisable land itineraries to enhance cruise holidays.

Designed as a resource for travel advisors, Adventure World's new Cruise Booklet showcases cruise and land combinations with lines like Uniworld and Hurtigruten, to destinations like North and South America, Antarctica, and Africa.

"At Adventure World, we believe that a cruise is just one of the elements that makes up an incredible journey," said Elsa McLean, Head of Sales at Adventure World (**pictured**).

"We are giving travellers the chance to go beyond the water, with authentic local encounters & unique wildlife that transform a great holiday into an unforgettable adventure."

Trips include the 'Grand Nordics', a four-country adventure across



Scandinavia, travelling by train, ferry and overland starting in Copenhagen, then exploring the old-world charm of Stockholm, discovering Norway's fjords and learning about Sami culture in Finnish Lapland.

There is also 'Authentic Egypt', which includes a Nile River cruise and immersive land journeys through Cairo, Luxor and visits to the Valley of the Kings, Karnak Temple and more. *JHM*

Click **HERE** to view the booklet.

Myanmar warning

SMARTTRAVELLER is warning Australians of heightened threats in Myanmar, fuelled by a national election taking place in Dec-Jan.

The travel advice platform said there may be more security incidents during that time, and continues to advise 'do not travel'.

SCA traffic update

SUNSHINE Coast Airport (SCA) will start construction on a new baggage handling facility tomorrow, as part of the hub's wider terminal improvements.

During the construction period, which wraps 31 Oct, drivers who are dropping off and picking up passengers will need to allow extra time for journeys, as the road in front of the terminal will be reduced to a single lane.

To help keep traffic flowing, additional staff will be on hand to assist, while free parking for 10 minutes is also available in all airport carparks.

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TA appoints acting chief

IT COULD be as long three months before Tourism Australia names a new managing director, with senior executive Robin Mack (**pictured**) announced as acting chief until the end of Nov.

Mack joined Tourism Australia in 2012, and has risen to the role of Executive GM of Global Markets and Business Events.

The development follows the departure of Phillipa Harrison, who, it was revealed this morning, has been appointed the Chief Executive Officer of Ras Al Khaimah Tourism Development Authority in the United Arab Emirates (**TD** breaking news).

The Emirate has set itself lofty tourism goals, and views Harrison's experience leading Australia's peak tourism body for many years as the perfect ingredient needed to lift its global tourism profile.

Commenting on her appointment, Harrison said she



was honoured to join Ras Al Khaimah's tourism efforts at a pivotal time of growth.

"Ras Al Khaimah has already established itself as an international success story, and I look forward to unlocking even more growth in the years ahead," Harrison added.

The region wants to rapidly build its reputation as a 'Destination of the Future', targeting at least 3.5 million tourists a year by 2030.

Ras Al Khaimah is located in the north of the UAE, and tourist attractions include nature walks, adventure activities, and a growing luxury appeal. **AB**

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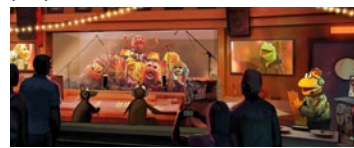
What's new, Disney?

WALT Disney World Resort announced major updates to all four of its theme parks during the company's Play 'n' Preview event, including an opening date for the Zootopia ride in Animal Kingdom.

The 3D film experience 'Zootopia: Better Zoogether!' will open on 07 Nov, and is replacing the original opening day attraction 'It's Tough to Be a Bug!', which closed in Mar.

The company also offered a first look at the 'Rock 'n' Roller Coaster Starring The Muppets' (**pictured**), set to open in Disney's Hollywood Studios in 2026.

Other announcements included changes coming to 'Animation Courtyard' in Hollywood Studios, with the area to feature updated character meet-and-greets and a play area for children.



HK Express concerns




DESPITE a recent surge in interest in Hong Kong from Aussies, Cathay Pacific's budget carrier Hong Kong Express has recorded a loss of HK\$524 million (A\$13.2 million) for the first half of 2025, worse than its total loss for the full year 2024.

According to Cathay Pacific CEO Ronald Lam, rumours of an impending devastating earthquake in Japan in May and Jun badly impacted bookings.

After the rumours were debunked in early Jul, Lam said demand on the key Japan route gradually recovered, though not yet to pre-rumour levels.

Hong Kong Express increased passenger capacity by 38%, but passenger yield fell by 22%, leaving revenue flat versus 2024.




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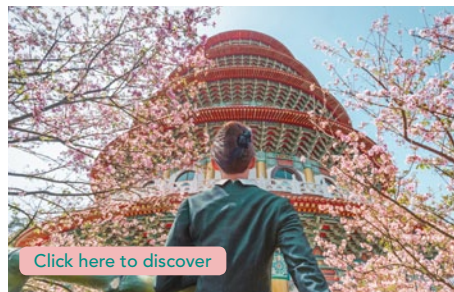
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Window Seat

TACO-LOVERS look away.

A festival in the Mexican city of Guadalupe served up a record-breaking 13,215 tacos in one hour using the largest frying pan in recorded history.

A team of 100 culinary students used a pan with a diameter of seven metres to achieve the tasty feat, locking a Guinness World Record for taco making and frying pans in the process.

The filling used for the tacos took three hours and 40 minutes to cook over a wood fire, with the 2.4 tonnes of food served to the festival's 10,000 attendees.

For those feeling both the pangs of hunger and jealousy for missing their chance to sample the massive batch of Mexican grub, they can console themselves by knowing all leftover tacos were donated to food banks.



ATMC members tour WSI



MEMBERS of the Association of Travel Management Companies (ATMC) got a private tour of the new Western Sydney International (Nancy-Bird Walton) Airport on Fri last week.

The visit was hosted by the WSI team, including GM of Airline Partnerships, Shiara Samarasinghe, and Manager of Airline Business Development, Helen De Nuntiis, who led a detailed tour of the new facility.

Members were given insights into the technology underpinning the passenger journey with executives from Amadeus showcasing biometric check-in and processing systems designed to streamline travel.

The ATMC group also got a look at the digital flight control centre, featuring more than 3,000 cameras monitoring the runway.

ATMC Chair and MD of Spencer Travel, Penny Spencer, told *Travel Daily*, "Visiting the new airport, I was incredibly impressed by the scale, technology, and vision

behind it".

"This is more than just an airport - it's the gateway to the future of travel for Sydney and beyond - we're excited about what this means for our clients and our industry," she added.

Glenn Wilcox, General Manager Government, Corporate Travel Management, enthused, "Our members were able to see first-hand how this project will reshape passenger journeys and deliver long-term economic benefits for Australia". *DF*

LH cashes in on BT

LUFTHANSA Group has completed its investment in Air Baltic, which has also been given funds from the Latvian Government, receiving a total of €28 million (A\$50,278,900).

Air Baltic hopes to attract €250-300 million through an IPO by the second quarter of 2026 to support its expansion to a fleet of 100 aircraft by 2029.

Wu unveils Asia '26

WENDY Wu Tours has unveiled its biggest-ever India & Central Asia collection for 2026/27.

The line-up features three new journeys across Sri Lanka, Mongolia and Northeast India, plus the return of bestsellers.

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NSW gets behind Eden



THE Port Authority of NSW has put its support behind regional cruise growth in the Bega Valley Shire, after inking an extended Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the local council and Eden Tourism.

The deal includes \$60,000 in funding over three years to support the Eden Cruise Coordinator, a role that organises volunteers and contributes to key visitor experiences, such as the Taste of Eden festival and market activations.

"This renewed partnership with Bega Valley Shire Council reflects Port Authority's commitment to enabling safe, sustainable, and commercially vibrant port operations in the Sapphire Coast region and across NSW," said Port Authority CEO, John McKenna.

"We are grateful for the support of Bega Valley Shire Council.

"Together, we're supporting

regional destinations like Eden to support local communities, drive economic opportunity, and deliver long-term value through sustainable cruise development."

Port Authority of NSW General Manager of Cruise, Martin Bidgood, added: "Port Authority is proud to play a leading role in strengthening the cruise industry's presence in regional destinations like Eden, helping them to unlock new opportunities for coastal communities."

The announcement follows a similar MoU for Newcastle signed in Jun, which saw the industry body partner with several councils and tourism organisations to boost cruise visitation in the Hunter and Central Coast region (**TD** 17 Jun). *JM*

AS to offer free net

ALASKA Airlines has announced plans to offer free wi-fi to passengers, and will begin to install Starlink on its fleet in 2026.

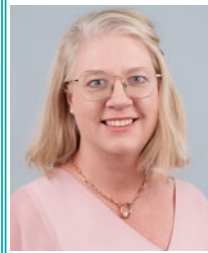
The airline expects to have all of its aircraft connected by 2027, following in the footsteps of partner carrier Hawaiian Airlines, which already has Starlink installed on all of its jets.

To access the free wi-fi, travellers will need to be a member of Atmos Rewards - the recently announced combined loyalty program from Alaska and Hawaiian (**TD** 21 Aug).



ATIA UPDATE

from Nina Hedges, Compliance Manager



IN MY role, you quickly get used to receiving 'curly' questions. Whether it is assisting

our members with unusual traveller complaints - some of which are truly bizarre - or discussing whether fam trips should attract FBT, no day is ever the same.

Often these questions come back to the fundamentals of the industry's accreditation scheme.

At a recent trade event, an industry member asked me whether it's "really only about insolvency protection".

I'm here to tell you what I told them - it is about so much more.

While we are proud to be working on an industry-led protection scheme as part of the association's broader A30 plan, the true value of accreditation lies in prevention, not just compensation.

Accreditation is awarded to businesses that meet strict criteria set by the association.

Members voluntarily agree to operate under a Code of Conduct,

maintain insurances, and meet financial benchmarks that safeguard client funds.

Unlike unaccredited suppliers, accredited businesses are reviewed regularly to ensure they continue to meet those standards.

We monitor members closely, with daily alerts on ASIC changes, directorship changes, court actions, tax defaults, and financial risk score movements.

If a business shows signs of trouble, we take swift action - including monitoring or revoking accreditation - to protect both consumers and the wider industry.

So, when someone says accreditation does not offer direct insolvency compensation, the answer is, that is not its primary purpose.

Accreditation is designed to reduce the likelihood of collapse in the first place - giving both businesses and consumers confidence that they are booking with a provider who meets, and continues to meet, the standards set for our industry.

Of course, there are many more benefits - too many for one column - however, if you would like to know more, I'd be happy to hear questions from you... especially if it's a curly one.

New Agoda AI tool

AGODA has introduced an AI-driven content enhancement tool that aims to improve the presentation of properties hosted on the platform.

The tool is driven by machine learning, which automatically enhances the millions of images on the Agoda site.

Faster loading speeds and more relevant results are also benefits of the new tool, which Chief Technology Officer Idan Zalberg said will hopefully further build trust with customers.

"With millions of images from different sources, we built a smart tool to classify, rank, and deliver the most relevant visuals, fast and at scale," he said.

"This gives travellers a clearer, more informative, and true-to-life view of where they might stay, helping them book with confidence," Zalberg added.

A change of heart?

AIR Mauritius is reportedly looking to cancel its three remaining Airbus A350 orders, according to media reports.

The carrier's existing fleet of four A350s is sufficient to operate its long-haul operations, Air Mauritius' Chairperson, Kremchand Beegoo, said.

Beegoo noted that while one of the planes is nearing completion, there is "still room to manoeuvre" to modify or cancel the order for the remaining two.

The retreat comes as the company reassesses its business strategy following significant financial losses.



Uniworld embarks on colourful journey to incredible India

UNIWORLD Boutique River Cruises hosted an exclusive Sydney event last week for travel advisors and media, celebrating the transformational power of travel, embracing the culture, cuisine (and even dance moves) of incredible India.

Guests of honour included Arjun Sinsinwar of *Ganges Voyager II* and India's Consul General, Dr. Janakiraman.

Uniworld's Managing Director for Australia and New Zealand, Alice Ager, revealed a major milestone: a substantial investment from Apollo, set to fuel newbuild ships, cutting-edge technology, and expanded global partnerships.

Ager also confirmed Luxury Gold's integration into Uniworld's elevated offerings - further cementing its position at the forefront of luxury travel.



MANAGING Director Alice Ager presents Uniworld's vision.



BOLLYWOOD performers hit the stage.



TIFFANY Mestrinho, Uniworld; Michelle Levins and Derek Harwood, My Cruise Concierge; Kurt Hufer, 1000 Mile Travel Group; and Meaghan Wolf from Wolf & Turner TA.



TRACY Willis, Golden Eagle Trains; Susan Le Roux, Uniworld; and Megan Bardsley, Golden Eagle Trains.



CARINA Mullen, CruiseHQ; Jen Pagett, Uniworld; and Astrid Maier, CruiseHQ.



MATT Mason, CT Partners; Michael Chase-Smith, Orbit World Travel; Alice Ager, Uniworld; Lisa Story, Orbit World Travel; and Michael Gazal, TravelManagers.



NORIYE Oto, OVC; Jen Pagett, Uniworld; and Danielle Gregory, OVC.



THE Uniworld Australia team.



Brazil says 'no' to COP30 subsidy

THE accommodation crisis for the upcoming United Nations climate summit, COP30, set to take place in the Brazilian coastal town of Belem in Nov, has hit new heights as the country's government has now refused requests to subsidise delegate hotels during the conference.

According to Reuters, Brazilian officials described a meeting with the UN about the situation as "tense", with an increased panic about the cost to stay in the city.

Supply of accommodation has fallen well short of what is required, pushing prices significantly north and putting attendance by developing nations especially at risk.

Miriam Belchior, Executive Secretary to President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva's Chief of Staff said, "The Brazilian Government is already bearing significant costs



for hosting the COP, so there is no way to subsidise delegations from other countries, including delegations from countries that are far richer than Brazil."

Instead, she suggested the UN increase its US\$144 daily allowance for delegates from the poorest nations amidst calls for COP30 to be moved.

The lack of accommodation in

Belem hit media headlines over a month ago, with no concrete solution in sight.

To ease the problem, the Brazilian Government has brought in two ocean liners to the city, which will provide around 6,000 beds.

The government also created an online accommodation platform offering 2,500 rooms. *DF*

TNZ redefines

TOURISM New Zealand has been selected to feature in the Global Sustainable Tourism Council's (GSTC) first-ever global digital series titled 'Travel Redefined'.

The series aims to take an in-depth look at how regenerative tourism supports people, the planet and prosperity, with New Zealand being invited to participate, thanks to its reputation in sustainable tourism and business events.

The series features Kohutapu Lodge and Tribal Tours Ltd as well as Te Pae Christchurch Convention Centre - both Qualmark New Zealand Gold-accredited members meeting high standards of sustainability.

To view the Tourism New Zealand content, click **HERE**.

Buffet breakfast war breaks out in major British media

HOTEL buffet breakfasts have come under fire for the amount of food wastage they produce, with the BBC labelling it a "darker truth".

The popular hotel option was targeted by the UK Govt-funded media organisation for its significant contribution to the "1.05 billion tonnes of food... wasted globally in 2024, with 28% coming from foodservice", including buffet breakfasts,

which generated twice as much waste as made-to-order meals, according to the BBC report.

The Standard's Josh Barrie hit back however, directly noting the BBC report, stating, "I don't want to see the total removal of the breakfast buffet - that would be lunatic and unkind."

"It would be yet another situation whereby greedy, irresponsible people ruin it for the rest of us."

Turkiye looks like it could make a first move, with local media suggesting advisers to President Recep Tayyip Erdogan will take a closer look at restaurant and hotel buffets.

According to the latest report by the non-governmental organisation Waste Prevention Foundation of Turkey (TISVA), around 8.7 million tonnes of food are thrown out annually in the Eurasian country. *DF*

Hope beats rain

DESPITE Sydney's terrible weather last week, the World Expeditions 'Hope In Action: Shaping the Future of Sustainable Travel' forum drew a significant audience.

Highlights included an energetic Q&A session that saw the audience actively engage with the experts, while there was also a panel session on sustainable travel's regeneration powers.

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extraordinary travel crafters

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MONEY

WELCOME to Money, TD's Tue feature on what the Australian dollar is doing.

AU\$1 = US\$0.648

THE Australian dollar has slipped slightly this week after gaining ground against the USD on Fri by more than 1%, while sentiment remains cautious amid concerns over China's economic slowdown.

Additionally, the Reserve Bank of Australia remains concerned about inflation, despite lowering its growth forecast during the Aug meeting from 2.1% down to 1.7% - which could be a sign of further rate cuts to come.

Wholesale rates this morning.

US	\$0.648
UK	£0.482
NZ	\$1.108
Euro	€0.558
Japan	¥95.79
Thailand	฿21.06
China	¥4.634
South Africa	11.42
Canada	\$0.898
Bitcoin	0.0000056

Luxury is the search for 'joy'

FROM the rise of boutique air experiences and bookings for 'transformational' travel, to the beauty of northern Italy and hotel brands entering the cruise space, travellers in 2026 will be focused on "joy-driven itineraries", according to SmartFlyer's third annual *Travel Trends Report*.

Guests are prioritising big-ticket trips, as six-figure bookings by SmartFlyer advisors have increased 26% year-on-year, while premium safaris rose by 22%.

Meanwhile, boutique air is on the up, said SmartFlyer founder & CEO Michael Holtz.

"Private aviation has gone from being a once-in-a-while indulgence to a strategic part of how our clients travel...it's about efficiency and access," he said.

Moving to land, travellers' demand for Italy is shifting, with rising interest in Milan, which is expecting a slate of hotel openings in 2026, including Mandarin Oriental.

As Cortina d'Ampezzo prepares for the 2026 Winter Olympics, guests are increasingly booking alpine trips in the Dolomites.

Hotel brands like Four Seasons are continuing to launch into



ultra-luxury cruise, with the Aman Resorts' 182-metre *Amangati* superyacht setting sail in 2027.

"Hotel brands at sea aren't just enhancing cruise offerings, they're redefining the category," said SmartFlyer's Head of Cruise, Saul Fonseca, who called it "a reinvention of luxury at sea". *JHM*

Hitting the highway

QUEENSLAND has unveiled its new 'Holiday Highway' campaign, encouraging Australians and their families to take a roadtrip along the Pacific Coast Way.

Launched through Tourism and Events Queensland as part of its Destination 2045 strategy, the campaign is backed by strategic partnerships and offers from the NRMA Group, SIXT and Expedia.

The campaign highlights the beaches, islands and attractions along the Pacific Coast Way.

Beware travel scams

IT IS Scam Awareness Week and consumers are being warned to watch out for travel-related schemes around ticketing fraud and accommodation.

One individual reported losing more than \$11,000 while booking a flight on an authentic-looking website that offered 'free digital travel assistant' service.

Once the victim made an online booking, the scammer cancelled it but kept the money, despite attempts to contact the 'agent'.

More than 108,000 scams were reported to Scam Watch in the first half of 2025.

VA's party in the sky

VIRGIN Australia is celebrating its 25th birthday with domestic one-way economy lite fares from just \$49 (Sydney to Ballina-Byron) and international return fares from \$439 (Brisbane to Port Vila).

Additionally, travellers can add Economy X during seat selection while booking, along with priority perks, including 25% off selected Economy X Exit Row seats.

The 'Party in the sky' sale fares are available **HERE** until 11.59pm AEST 31 Aug, for travel between 14 Oct 2025 and 25 Jun 2026.





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Solomon Islands: Raw and Real Adventure

Strung like sea-green pearls from Papua New Guinea to Vanuatu, the Solomon Islands remains one of the world's last truly untouched adventure destinations. Little has changed since Spanish explorer Alvaro de Mendana first sailed into this tucked away corner of the South Pacific arrived in 1568. As a result, having escaped mass tourism, this pristine eco-paradise offers a rare alternative for travellers seeking authentic adventure.

For divers, the steep walls and unspoiled technicolour coral gardens teem with marine life, complemented by hundreds of WWII shipwrecks and aircraft littering the seabed. For surfers and a previously well-kept secret safeguarded by only a handful

of hard-travelling board riders, the Solomon Islands offers some of the world's most perfect and uncrowded waves.

For sports fishermen too, these Hapi Isles present a fisherman's nirvana. Irrespective of whether you troll, fly fish, surf cast or simply dangle a hook, these Hapi Isles offer something to suit every type of angler.

On land, ancient rainforests and volcanic landscapes, unspoiled jungle trails, and hidden waterfalls await the keen trekker and birdwatchers too will be equally captivated with the over 300 distinct bird species found here, acting as a magnet for twitchers from all over the world.

For those seeking adventure far

beyond the ordinary, this is one part of the South Pacific that remains as it all once was and always will be - raw and real!

NEED HELP?

Speak to the expert - Tourism Solomons' Trade Manager Australia/New Zealand, Richard Skewes is the go to point for all travel industry related enquiries:

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