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## Today's issue of TD

*Travel Daily* today features six pages of the latest travel industry news, plus a full page from Visit Britain.

## JQ locks in Colombo

**JETSTAR** will launch direct services from Melbourne to Sri Lankan capital Colombo on 25 Aug 2026 - marking the first time a budget carrier has done so.

Qantas' low-cost airline will fly the new route year-round, three times a week using its fleet of Boeing 787 Dreamliners.

"Colombo is an incredible destination and we're excited to be making it easier for Aussies to experience everything the beautiful country of Sri Lanka has to offer," Jetstar Chief Executive Officer Stephanie Tully said.

"This new route out of our home base of Melbourne is part of a huge growth phase for Jetstar - we've added new destinations, more aircraft and are expanding our international network".

## CTM in more trouble?

**THE** latest twist in the Corporate Travel Management (CTM) auditing saga has seen the threat of class actions emerge.

According to Head of Class Actions at law firm Clifford Chance, Brad Woodhouse, potential litigators are already looking closely at CTM's auditing issues across a number of prior reporting periods.

"It's highly likely that any claim against CTM would involve allegations that the accounts released to the market... contained material errors and that...its accounts did not present a true and fair view of the company's financial position," Woodhouse told *The Australian*.

"Any claim is likely to involve allegations that the company has engaged in misleading or deceptive conduct in breach of... the *Corporations Act & ASIC Act*".

The possible legal action follows the UK Government confirming it is now reviewing its multi-million-

dollar contract with CTM, as well as an "urgent investigation" into CTM's overcharging disclosures detailed last month (**TD 28 Nov**).

In Australia, the Finance Department last week demanded CTM audit its accounts, with the company agreeing to commission an independent review into how much it has charged the Federal Government (**TD 04 Dec**).

The scandal has also brought into question the future of CTM's Managing Director Jamie Pherous, with the under siege executive telling a reporter at *The Australian* the board has not asked him to resign.

Another area of interest is CTM's position on the board of the Australian Travel Industry Association (ATIA), currently occupied by ANZ CEO Jo Sully.

While ATIA declined to comment on CTM's board position, it did confirm CTM continues to hold an active accreditation with the body. **AB**

## Qantas to tweak AA

**QANTAS** and American Airlines are seeking to extend and revise their joint business agreement covering trans-Pacific routes between Australia, New Zealand and North America, filing a new submission with the ACCC.

Under the current deal, the carriers coordinate scheduling, capacity, pricing, frequent flyer lounge access and codeshares.

Qantas and AA are seeking to have their cooperation extended for another five years, with the revised agreement to have added flexibility built in to more easily adapt to evolving economic conditions, including a commitment to work together on tariffs and marketing policies.

## Do Britain differently

**EXPERIENCE** Britain differently with Viva Holidays.

A number of the tour operator's itineraries in the United Kingdom are profiled on **page seven** of today's issue of *Travel Daily*.

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## Star Clippers changes course

**EXCLUSIVE**

**TALL-SHIP** cruise line Star Clippers and Adventure World have mutually agreed to end their long-standing GSA partnership in Australia from 04 Jan 2026, **Travel Daily** understands.

Entire Travel Group will take over the luxury cruise brand's account, with Star Clippers' current National Account Manager APAC, Roger Condon (pictured), to exit Adventure World and follow the account across to the new GSA.

Outside of a brief three-month pause in late 2022/early 2023, Condon has led Star Clippers' presence in Australia and New Zealand for close to 10 years.

Adventure World has represented the brand locally for even longer - around 20 years - with the operator to fulfil all existing bookings made prior to the 04 Jan 2026 transfer date through to departure, but will not accept any new bookings.

Star Clippers was founded in



1989 by Swedish entrepreneur Mikael Krafft, who pledged to fill a gap in the cruise sector for travellers seeking sailings aboard 19th-century clipper ships offering luxurious onboard amenities and excursions.

The brand operates three vessels and sails to regions such as the Caribbean, Mediterranean, Panama Canal, Central America, and more.

Both Entire Travel Group and Adventure World did not provide comment when contacted. **AB**

## Delta says g'day LA

**DELTA** Air Lines' debut flight from LA landed in MEL last week.

Operated on a long-haul Airbus A350, flight DL11 was met with much fanfare, including a water cannon salute and an Indigenous performance on the tarmac.

Delta Air Lines is the first carrier to fly the A350 non-stop between Melbourne and the US.

Melbourne is preparing for more than seven million travellers in Dec-Jan, including more than 2.5 million overseas passengers.

## ATMC approves JV

**ASSOCIATION** of Travel Management Companies (ATMC) members have this morning voted in favour of a joint-venture with the Australian Travel Industry Association (ATIA) (**TD** breaking news).

Coming into effect on 01 Jan next year, the partnership will see ATMC maintain autonomy over its agenda and identity, while at the same time gain access to ATIA's national platform of advocacy, policy expertise, and workforce attraction initiatives.

Under the terms of the deal, ATMC members will be recognised as an independent segment within ATIA, represented through the ATMC Committee as a formal sub-committee of the ATIA board.

## QF links GC to AKL

**QANTAS** will operate its first international route from the Gold Coast in close to five years when it launches flights to Auckland on 16 Jun next year.

The carrier will operate the route three times a week, and will make Qantas the only airline offering business class between the two cities.

**MEANWHILE**, Qantas has taken off today on its new direct services connecting Perth with Johannesburg and Auckland.

"Today's inaugural flight to Johannesburg is almost full and we're seeing positive forward bookings, so we know there is strong appetite [for the route]," QF CEO Int'l Cam Wallace said.

## QR names new chief

**QATAR** Airways Group has appointed Hamad Ali Al-Khater (pictured) as its new Group CEO, who succeeds Engr. Badr Mohammed Al-Meer in the role (**TD** breaking news yesterday).

Al-Khater joins Qatar Airways Group from Hamad International Airport, where he served as Chief Operating Officer overseeing key expansion activities, and before that held several senior executive roles with QatarEnergy.

"As we welcome Al-Khater, we look forward to building on the strong foundations and expansive global network of Qatar Airways, anchored by our exceptional team in Qatar and around the world," Qatar Airways Group Chair Saad Sherida Al-Kaabi said.

Qatar Airways did not disclose the reason for Al-Meer's exit after just two years in the role, but thanked him for his service.

The leadership change arrives at a key time for the Middle Eastern carrier in Australia, which now owns a 25% stake in Virgin Australia (**TD** 01 Oct 2024) and operates VA partnership flights from key local hubs to Doha.



## TTC's new office

**THE** Travel Corporation (TTC) is understood to have locked in its new head office premises in Sydney's CBD, as it prepares to vacate its long-standing Bondi Junction presence, which was listed for sale in Oct (**TD** 03 Oct).

There is no firm date on the move to the 21st floor of the 321 Kent Street office, which is subject to a refurbishment.

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## CLIA slams French tax

**CRUISE** Lines International Association Europe has criticised the Senate approval of a €15 per pax fee at every port in France.

While still needing final lower house approval, if it goes ahead, the levy will become active at some stage next year and generate €75 million annually.

However, CLIA Europe said the move - designed to tax carbon from cruise ships - was slugging the sector twice, because it already contributes substantially to national and EU climate funds.

## TK and SAA tie-up

**TURKISH** Airlines and South Africa Airways have signed a codeshare agreement, which will take effect on 01 Mar 2026.

The TK code will be placed on SAA flights across Johannesburg, Cape Town, and Durban, while SAA will place its code on select TK flights between Istanbul and J'burg, London, Paris, and more.

## My turn for more rewards

**GLOBAL** incentive, loyalty and training platform, MyBookingRewards.com, has launched in Australia and New Zealand - providing another platform for local agents and suppliers to connect.

The platform allows agents to increase earning potential via cash bonuses, rewards, points and free night stays.

It will also provide sales support tools across varied supplier rewards programs.

On the supply side, members can connect with an engaged global agent community via My Booking Rewards' global network facilities, and their own white label rewards program.

Darren Pearson, CEO of My Booking Rewards (**pictured**) said, "My Booking Rewards currently operates in worldwide markets including Europe, North America, and now the Pacific Ocean region.

"Within the last 12 months, our



member agents have generated \$1.3 billion in revenue for our supplier partners and we have transacted over \$4 million in tangible rewards to our agent community," he added.

Pearson said the business was excited to launch in the Australian and New Zealand markets and confirmed that MyAgentRates.com will launch in early 2026 as a closed user group for verified My Booking Rewards agents, offering them the opportunity to book their own personal, educational travel at preferred agent rates. *DF*

## Islands are "artificial"

**VIKING** CEO Torstein Hagen has fired a shot across the bow of his competitors, labelling the pursuit by some larger cruise lines to acquire private islands as a quest for the "artificial".

"If you don't have any real experiences, you create artificial islands," Hagen told *Skift*.

"There's nothing wrong with that, but it's not the product we like to be known for."

Hagen also took aim at ultra luxury brands that lean into historical trappings of the segment, such as butlers, white gloves and chandeliers.

"Opulence is a bad word and it's exactly what we don't want to do," Hagen said.

"I would rather have showers that work than Faberge eggs that you're worried about breaking."

When asked about heightened competition on European rivers, Hagen said Viking was prepared to be aggressive as it has "a great position" it will exploit fully.

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### CATO's heartfelt Xmas

**THE** Council of Australian Tour Operators (CATO) celebrated another sold-out Christmas Lunch in Sydney last Thu, bringing together industry leaders and partners for an afternoon of festive fun and connection.

One of the highlights was an appearance by Australian actor Gyton Grantley (pictured with G Adventures local chief Sean Martin), who captivated the audience with a series of behind-the-scenes anecdotes, personal career reflections, and many humorous industry insights.

The marquee gathering also delivered a touching finale to the year, lending important support to the Prostate Cancer Foundation of Australia (PCFA).

Guests took part in raising money for the cause through on-the-day donations and the purchase of personalised Christmas baubles.

Combined donations from



attendees, sponsors and CATO Managing Director Brett Jardine, raised \$40,000 for the PCFA.

The worthy cause holds a special place in the heart for Jardine, who has been open about his own battle with the illness (TD 02 Sep).

Meanwhile, guests were welcomed with a Sri Lankan-themed reception sponsored by the Sri Lanka Tourism Promotion Bureau, with Yasoja Gunasekera, the High Commissioner-designate of Sri Lanka to Australia, in attendance. AB



**THE** new voco Gosford by IHG (TD 17 Oct) celebrated its official opening last week with a party on Fri, attended by members of the travel industry and a range of local Central Coast identities.

Voco Gosford (pictured inset) is the centrepiece of the new Archibald Precinct - a mixed-use development which incorporates dining and residential spaces, transforming the city's skyline as by far the tallest building on the Central Coast.

The hotel was welcomed with an intricate party spanning three of the property's spaces: the lobby foyer, the pool deck, and the expansive top deck bar.

Special guests Sneaky Sound System provided the

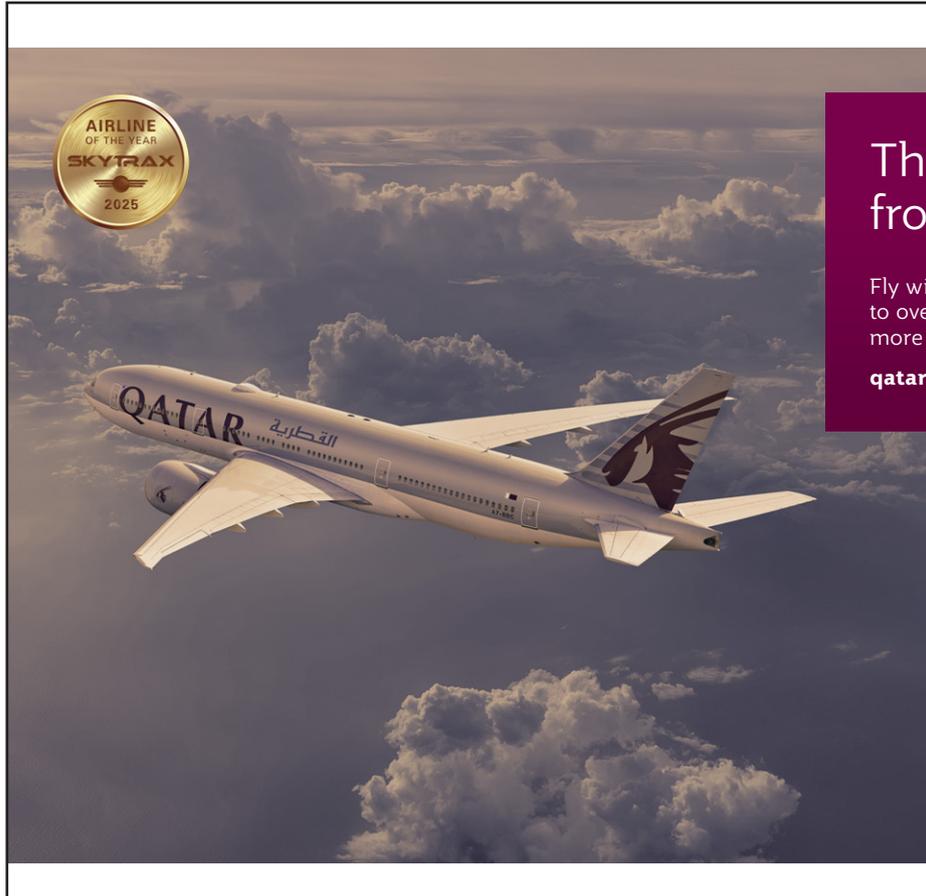


entertainment, with guests enjoying drinks and bites, including a giant carved-up tuna.

The launch of voco Gosford marks the fifth of the brand's properties in Australia.

Voco recently celebrated 100 open hotels globally. MS

**Pictured** above are Angela Cowley and Christina Atherton from Eight Communications, which handles the public relations for the new hotel.



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## Haslam makes a run

**THE** owner of South Australian-based eco-operator Untamed Escapes, Craig Haslam, will run as an independent candidate for the seat of Flinders at the 2026 South Australian state election in Mar.

Taking to LinkedIn to make the announcement, Haslam said he would be “taking a step back” from the business over the next four months to embark on the campaign, with new General Manager Kristy Malapa to steer the business in his absence.

“This wasn’t a decision I took lightly, it’s something I’ve been thinking about for a long time, and it comes from a deep love for the Eyre Peninsula and the people who make it what it is.”



## Post more fun in SA

**GUESTS** will have the opportunity to experience South Australia’s iconic Outback Mail Run, delivering post and supplies to remote stations as part of a three-day small group package.

South Australia Destination Management Co’s ‘Outback Odyssey: Coober Pedy & The Mail Run Adventure’ also includes underground accommodation and sunset drinks at the Breakaways - read more [HERE](#).

## Princess commits to Oz



**EXCLUSIVE**

**PRINCESS** marked its 50th anniversary sailing in Australian waters on the weekend on board *Discovery Princess*, the line’s newest ship to homeport here.

The celebrations marked the line’s commitment to the region, as *Discovery* will homeport in Sydney until 07 Apr 2026, followed by *Royal Princess* and *Grand Princess* in 2026-2027 and *Sapphire Princess* in Western Australia in 2027-2028.

“We’ve been here for 50 years, so in many ways, we’ve grown as Australia has grown,” Global President Gus Antorcha told **TD**.

“We have wonderful, loyal guests, who enjoy our product and we have demand from that following, so it makes sense for us to deploy ships here - we have year round capacity, and then we have seasonal capacity,” he said.

Built in 2022, the Royal-Class *Discovery* offers more capacity,

hardware and features - a reflection of the line’s focus on the region, Antorcha suggested.

In the last couple of years, three cruise lines have left Australia, including Disney Cruise Line, Cunard and Virgin, with P&O now folded into Carnival.

While Antorcha conceded Australia has some challenges and that markets have their ups and downs, he felt positive about the growing potential of the market and its importance.

He also noted the line’s growing focus on the wider Asia Pacific region, with a third of the Princess fleet to be based there by 2026-2027.

“Australia is poised to see more [Princess] capacity and growth as the region as a whole becomes more important to us,” Antorcha said. **JHM**

**Pictured:** Antorcha and Captain Alexander Genzo on board *Discovery Princess*.



## Window Seat

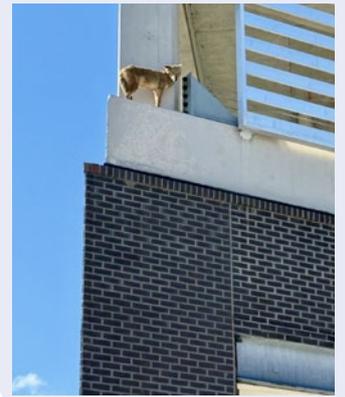
**MANY** hotels boast about their great view, and one furry guest recently put a Florida property’s rep to the test.

Luminary Hotel & Co., Autograph Collection in South Florida recently spotted a coyote on the ledge of its parking garage (**pictured**), presumably admiring the view over the Caloosahatchee River.

The coyote drew a crowd of onlookers too, including police, before eventually finding its own way down.

Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission personnel monitored the coyote as it left the area, with the canine last seen heading into the nearby woods.

Officials for the hotel said they offered the coyote an early check-in and some Bonvoy points to lure him off the ledge - for a single room though we hope.



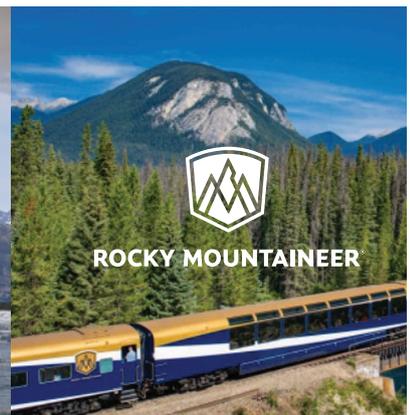
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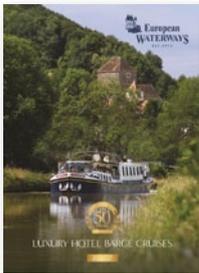
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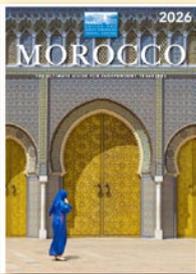
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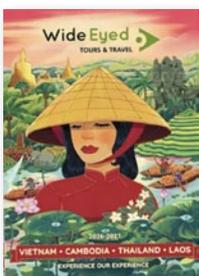


**European Waterways - Luxury Hotel Barge Cruises**  
European Waterways has unveiled its new 2026-27 brochure, showcasing the cruise line's expanded fleet and immersive experiences. The brochure highlights expert guidance on the best times to travel, curated off-the-beaten-path excursions, and its fleet of vessels that showcase the rich character of each cruising region. It also reflects a fresh, modern design, with larger, more immersive photography, simplified itineraries, and a cleaner

layout allowing guests to engage more deeply with each region and vessel. The brochure can be ordered or viewed online **HERE**. European Waterways is also currently offering early booking savings for next year, with 10–20% off whole-boat charters and cabin bookings. Guests can also secure 2027 cruises at 2026 prices when booked by 31 May.



**Greece & Mediterranean Travel Centre - 2026 Morocco**  
Greece & Mediterranean Travel Centre (GMTC) has unveiled its 2026 Morocco brochure. The Med destination specialists offer a range of packages showcasing the best of the Maghrebi country, with clients also able to mix-and-match experiences and travel styles to build an itinerary that fits them. These tailor-made journeys are highlighted throughout the brochure, including destinations such as Marrakech, Fes, Casablanca, the Sahara Desert, and the Atlas Mountains, and more - **CLICK HERE** to read.



**Wide Eyed Tours - Vietnam Cambodia Thailand Laos**  
Wide Eyed Tours, a leading destination management company covering Vietnam, Cambodia, Thailand, and Laos, has unveiled its new 2026/27 brochure, highlighting its journeys throughout the region. The collection features updated sample itineraries that can be 100% customised, new multi-country itineraries, maps, weather guides, and destination insights curated by Wide Eyed's local on-the-ground teams. Wide

Eyed Tours focuses on off-the-beaten-path adventures, street food tours, boutique hotel stays, wellness activities, and multigenerational travel options - **CLICK HERE** to download.

## Spain says 'hola' to Oz



**TOURISM** Spain is ready to reinvigorate its relationship with the Australian travel trade in 2026, according to Director Marta Fernandez Martin.

"We plan to increase training opportunities, trade events and collaborative marketing so that Australian partners feel more confident in promoting Spain," Martin told *Travel Daily*.

"We are also working with some agents on their own marketing campaigns and providing media support for their tours, which helps them reach clients more effectively and reinforces our shared goals for the market."

Tourism Spain recently visited several Australian cities with representatives from Spanish regions, hotels and travel companies, connecting with media and trade.

It comes off the back of the organisation's refreshed international campaign, 'Think you know Spain? Think again', which focuses on showcasing the country's regional areas outside of the main cities like Barcelona.

According to Tourism Spain,

the organisation's refreshed campaign aligns with the Espana Turismo 2030 strategy, focusing on mindful, slower travel into local communities, and exploring lesser-visited regions along the coastline outside of the major cities, such as Salamanca, Galicia, Malaga City, Catalunya, and more.

Martin noted that while there had been plenty of coverage of protests against overtourism in Spain, this is mostly driven by a small portion of the population focused on housing issues.

"Australian visitors are an important market for Spain because they continue to grow in both arrival numbers and overall tourism spend," she said.

"They stay longer than many other long haul markets, and their travel patterns contribute positively to local economies across different regions.

At the end of next year, Tourism Spain is planning to invite a large group of Australian delegates to attend a major tourism summit in the country. *JHM*

**Pictured:** Tourism Spain and local representatives in Sydney.

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