

Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today features seven pages of the latest news, including our **Corporate Update**, plus full pages from:

- Treasures of the South Pacific
- Hong Kong Airlines

Etihad A350 SYD

ETIHAD Airways has completed the transition of its Sydney-Abu Dhabi route to Airbus A350s two months earlier than planned (**TD** 28 Aug).

The airline now operates 10 weekly A350-1000 flights from Sydney, including double-daily services on Mon, Tue, and Fri, connecting to almost 100 destinations around the world.

Etihad is working toward increasing A350 services to 14 weekly, or double-daily in the future, in line with the ongoing expansion of its A350 fleet.

The Melbourne route continues to operate daily on a B787-9.

Stage & Screen's Oz boss

STAGE and Screen Travel, Flight Centre Travel Group's entertainment and sports business, has announced the appointment of Wonitta Atkins as General Manager, Australia.

Atkins brings nearly a decade of experience with the company and extensive experience in senior roles across hospitality and travel management.

After joining as an Account Manager, Atkins progressed through Head of Account Management and Head of Operations, with her achievements including leading the operational response to Queen Elizabeth II's passing in 2022, ensuring all Australian TV networks were broadcasting from London within days.

"Wonitta embodies what Brightness of Future means in practice," said Tiziano Galipo, who was appointed Stage and Screen's Global MD earlier this



year (**TD** 07 Feb).

"She first experienced our service as a supply partner and was so impressed that she joined us; nearly a decade later, she's built an extraordinary track record across every role she's held," Galipo added.

"As we celebrate 30 years and look to the next chapter, there is no one better to lead us."

Atkins, who is **pictured**, steps into the role at a pivotal time of growth for Australia's sports tourism sector.

Reflecting on her appointment, Atkins said: "I've had the privilege of experiencing Stage and Screen from both sides, first as a supply partner, and then as part of this team for nearly a decade." *JM*

See you next year

TREASURES of the South Pacific is looking forward to seeing its travel partners in 2026, as it looks forward to what will be an amazing year - head to **page eight** of today's *Travel Daily*.

A new way to HK

WORLD Aviation is today promoting a new way to fly to Hong Kong, with direct flights to Melbourne with Hong Kong Airlines starting next year - see **page nine** for more details.

SQ ups Adelaide

SINGAPORE Airlines increased its services from Adelaide last week, with the boosted schedule to run until 31 Jan 2027.

Two additional weekly flights, operated by a Boeing 787-10 on SQ279/SQ278, will bring the total service to 12 weekly frequencies, giving travellers more options to fly around the world from ADL.

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US tourism will suffer

OPINION

Tourism expert and academic David Beirman lives in the small NSW township of Nundle, about 60km from Tamworth.



Got an opinion to share? Let us know in up to 400 words via email to feedback@traveldaily.com.au.

TRUMP'S proposal to require tourists to provide a five-year social media history as condition of entry to the United States is extraordinarily disturbing for prospective travellers to the country (TD 11 Dec).

If this proposal is adopted by the US Government, President Trump could go down in history as the first US president to single-handedly destroy the country's inbound tourism industry.

It is not only a gross abuse of human rights, it is an assault on the free speech of any visitor to the US.

Let's say you have viewed a cartoon which lampoons Trump on a social media site, you could potentially be denied entry as an enemy of the USA.

Trump's policies and actions have already damaged tourism from the country's two biggest international source markets - Canada and Mexico - so now he plans extend the damage globally.

It can only be hoped that this insane Trumpian thought bubble will be burst quickly by wiser heads.

I appreciate that the USA, like all countries, has the right to protect its citizens from visitors who present a security threat, but this move is a step too far and is more likely to be abused rather than used by the current US administration.

Authoritarian regimes worldwide will ask themselves, why don't we follow Trump's lead?

The 18 Asian countries my 49 contributors and I covered in my forthcoming book *Risk and Tourism Marketing in Asia* (TD 04 Nov) must be delighted that this proposal, if implemented, would direct millions

more tourists to Asia.

It would also be beneficial to Australian tourism, as it would attract increased US visitation to Australia (the new land of the free)

and many people from our source markets will find a visit to Australia a far more attractive proposition than a visit to the USA,

This is terrible news for a magnificent destination.

Many of us love America but this is a looney tune move by the self proclaimed genius, Donald J Trump.

If implemented, this proposal would represent the ultimate own-goal for the USA's joint hosting with Canada and Mexico of the 2026 FIFA World Cup.

“It is an assault on the free speech of any visitor to the United States of America”

Boeing trumps Airbus

EUROPEAN aircraft manufacturer Airbus has conceded that its American counterpart Boeing has likely beaten it to the punch for the largest number of orders received.

With Airbus' net order total of 700 aircraft compared to Boeing's 908, it spells the first time that Boeing has won the order race in six years.

The key factor behind Airbus' shortfall was the U.S. trade tariffs imposed by the Trump administration.

CEO Guillaume Feury admitted in a radio interview, "The fact that we have been ahead on orders for five years means our order backlog is much higher than that of our main competitor.

"But it is true that they [Boeing] have been helped by the American president as part of tariff negotiations with several countries, where plane orders became part of the resolution of



trade disputes."

Boeing's CEO Kelly Ortberg was also open about the situation, saying that the Trump administration "has been very helpful" in pushing a sales campaign for American exports.

President Trump personally took credit for Boeing's sale spike, telling business leaders and media, "Boeing gave me the award for the greatest salesman in the history of Boeing, which was a nice little award". JB



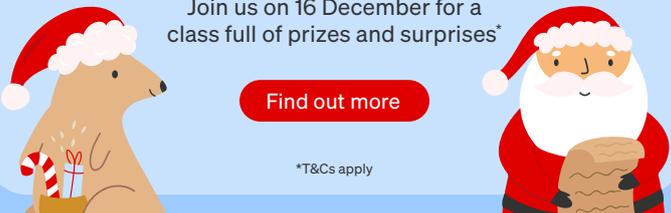
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Window Seat

VIRGIN Voyages has added a splash of magic and mythology to its latest brand campaign, which brings the cruise line's mermaids to life using generative AI.

The short film gives voice and dimension to the four symbolic figures at the helm of each Lady Ship, introducing Scarlet, Valiant, Resilient and Brilliant, each designed to embody different aspects of the cruise experience - passion, courage, resilience and wisdom.

"Our mermaids have always represented the soul of the sea and the emotional essence of who we are as a brand," said Bailey Edwards, Editorial Director at Virgin Voyages.

"Bringing them to life through this cinematic series allowed us to give depth and voice to that mythos - not just as a visual motif, but as characters who reflect the spirit and individuality of our sailors."

The fantasy characters have stirred up plenty of intrigue, with the video so far reeling in more than 33,000 views - dive in [HERE](#).



Fiji campaign adds science



TOURISM Fiji has launched the Holiday Happiness Reset campaign off the back of research that shows a holiday is the best way to combat the stresses of the holiday period.

The research, produced in conjunction with Neuroscientist Dr Lila Landowski from the University of Tasmania, found that 50% of Australians (10.9 million) feel more stressed during Nov/Dec than at any other time of year, one in four report their wellbeing has declined since this time last year, and 54% agree that taking a holiday early in the year helps them feel refreshed and more productive.

Key stress triggers included financial pressure (67%), family expectations (57%) and social obligations (48%).

Among those who feel more stressed during the silly season

than other times of the year, prioritising me-time was the most common way to help break free from stress (50%).

The findings build on Tourism Fiji's previous Science of Happiness research, which showed happiness is rooted in simple practices such as slowing down, and spending time with loved ones.

"Stress isn't just a feeling - over time, it rewires the brain, impacting mood, memory, and decision-making," Dr Lila Landowski explained.

"The good news is that simple lifestyle factors like exercise, social connection, time in nature, and sunlight can increase our resilience to stress."

After taking a holiday, 58% of Australians report improved mood, 49% feel more energised and 46% feel less stressed. *JB*

BNE eases passage

BRISBANE'S domestic terminal now has a new entry point, allowing for passengers with only carry-on luggage to head straight to security.

The 1,250m² area boasts a brand-new security screening system featuring Rapiscan CT, which allows for items such as laptops and drink bottles to remain inside customers' bags.

Set to be fully operational by Christmas, the screening area will include 10 lanes and larger tubs to fit more items, reducing processing time.

"We want to thank the community for their patience over the past two years while we worked to deliver these significant works to refresh the terminal and upgrade security screening equipment to meet Australian Government standards by the end of this year," said Brisbane Airport CEO Gert-Jan de Graaf.

CATO IWD sponsor

THE Council of Australian Tour Operators (CATO) has announced women-only travel operator Sisterhood Womens Travel as the sponsor of its 2026 International Women's Day (IWD) luncheon.

"Their dedication to creating opportunities for women to explore the world with confidence embodies the very spirit of this event," Managing Director Brett Jardine said.

The 2026 IWD luncheon will be held 10 Mar 2026 at Brisbane's Calile Hotel.

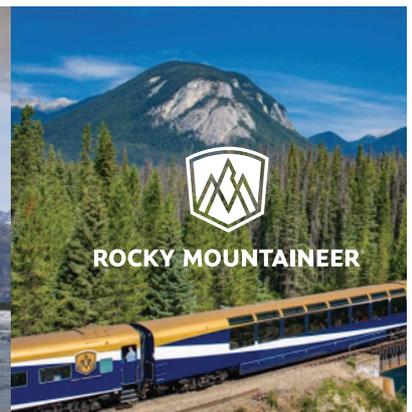
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HX Expeditions and Rocky Mountaineer are giving travel advisors the chance to join the ultimate famil — exploring the Canadian Rockies by rail and Alaska's Inside Passage by sea.

Simply book and deposit any HX Expeditions or Rocky Mountaineer journey between 17 November 2025 and 27 February 2026 to go in the draw to win a spot on this exclusive April 2026 famil.



Scan the QR code to register your bookings and increase your chances to win with every deposit made. Conditions apply.



Townsville precinct opens



TOWNSVILLE'S Flinders Street Wharves, a landmark \$30 million precinct overlooking the Ross Creek River, was officially unveiled this week with the aim of revitalising the region's hospitality, tourism and entertainment sectors.

"This project has been years in the making and to officially welcome our first guests through the doors today is a historic occasion for this city," co-owner of Flinders Street Wharves, Grant Morgan, said.

"We are incredibly proud to deliver a destination where locals can celebrate the best of their city and visitors can experience a new, vibrant tourism offering in North Queensland."

Flinders Street Wharves is located within the heritage Burns Philp & Co. building, the last surviving 19th century warehouse complex along the river.

Featuring seven vibrant spaces

in one destination, the 2,600sqm site aims to attract visitors from day to night, with The Kiosk, The Beer Garden, The Bistro, Laneway Bar, Merchants Bar and the Dining Room.

At The Rooftop, guests can enjoy panoramic views and live entertainment in the evenings.

In the future, the site will also offer North Queensland's first floating pontoon bar and tourism hub in an effort to increase connectivity between the mainland and tourism hotspots.

The Docks will be an overwater restaurant and bar showcasing Townsville's fresh seafood, offering with a Mediterranean-inspired menu.

Meanwhile, the hub will feature two pontoons operated by Posidon Adventures, which will offer boat and jetski tours to Magnetic Island and Cape Cleveland, plus shorter trips up and down the river. *JHM*

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Momentum extends to '26

THE global travel industry enters next year with steady momentum, according to research firm Phocuswright, with total gross bookings projected to reach US\$1.67 trillion (around A\$2.5 trillion) as international demand strengthens and travellers prioritise experiences.

Travel and tourism is expected to generate more than US\$11.7 trillion (A\$17.5 trillion) toward global GDP this year, Phocuswright found as part of its *Travel Forward: Data, Insights & Trends for 2026* report.

This is despite economic and geopolitical pressures, underscoring the industry's enduring resilience even as growth patterns vary by region.

Digital adoption continues to accelerate and reshape the marketplace, Phocuswright found, with online bookings on track to rise 8% this year to US\$1.07 trillion (A\$1.6 trillion).



Our region is a strong leader in this field, with Asia Pacific in particular expanding digital access in emerging regions.

OTAs are projected to generate US\$408 billion (A\$612 billion) in bookings, maintaining a meaningful share of global online spend as consumers shift more activity into digital channels.

These changes are paralleled by a rapid evolution in traveller behaviour, Phocuswright added, as AI becomes a more important planning tool.

Phocuswright expects more than a third (39%) of active American travellers to report using AI for travel research or planning by the end of 2025. *MS*



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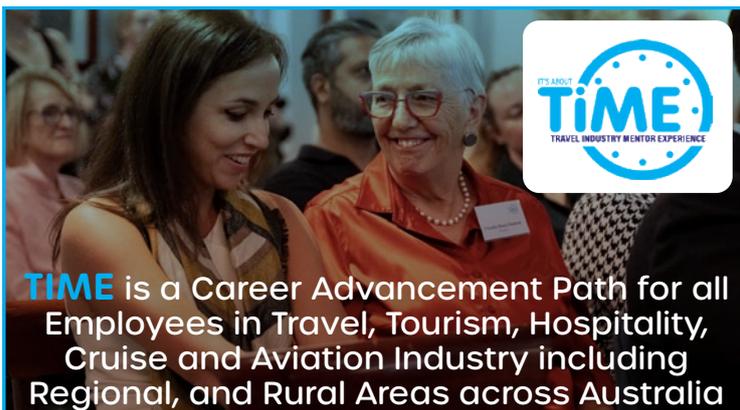
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Travellers Choice nails it yet again

TRAVELLERS Choice's 2025 national conference in Melbourne was themed 'Nailed It', and the group's members showed the travel industry exactly why they are on top of their game.

The event saw Travellers Choice MD Christian Hunter unveil a number of announcements (*TD* 01 Dec), while the conference featured engaging panel sessions on hot topics facing advisors, and a gala awards night full of colour.



THE Jamison Travel team absolutely 'nailing it' at the Gala Dinner.



LEAH Mullen from Tailor Made Travel Mt Gambier accepts her Leading Agency Award from Christian Hunter.



THE ultimate Travellers Choice fans, Windsong Travel's Sarah Luck and Leonie Ivey.



FOUR Travellers Choice members celebrate 25 years of membership: Jacqueline Rogers, Balnarring Travel & Cruise; Carol Shaw, Tour de Force Travel; Julie-Ann Silvey, Chelsea Cruise & Travel; and Hans Went, Canadian Bay Travel.



CARLY Montgomery, Cash Passport Mastercard; David Reid, MW Tours; and Catherine Marshall, Royal Caribbean share their good vibes.

MD CHRISTIAN Hunter reworks a Hunters and Collectors hit to tell the story of the group's long-running NTIA success.



ATIA CEO Dean Long delivers a key address to members.



CORPORATE UPDATE

Air Tahiti means business

AIR Tahiti has announced a ‘world-first’ air service, comprised entirely of business-class seating.

The “100% business class” ATR 72-600 will fly between the French Polynesian islands of Bora-Bora, Raiatea and Papeete, with a special livery that will soon be unveiled.

Featuring the new premium ATR HighLine cabin concept, the plane offers 26 wide seats arranged in 1-1 configuration, giving every passenger both window and aisle access, as well as a side table, storage, USB ports and in-flight entertainment.

“Air Tahiti Signature All-Business Class reflects our ambition to provide an exclusive service that



begins at passenger check-in, with a fully redesigned customer journey and unmatched ground services for an unforgettable inter-island trip,” said Edouard Wong Fat, Air Tahiti CEO.

“It is about creating a connection between modernity, comfort, Polynesian hospitality, and sustainability values that define Air Tahiti.”

The new service is open for bookings now, and will take off on 08 Dec 2026. *JB*

WLG pins Uber

WELLINGTON Airport will be the first in New Zealand to experience Uber’s PIN system.

Instead of waiting for an assigned driver to arrive at the terminal, several drivers will already be present at a designated pick-up zone, with pax given a PIN upon booking that can be provided to the driver.

The new ‘PIN’ system is designed to handle larger volumes of passengers landing at the terminal, ensuring they exit the airport in a faster time.

Emma Foley, MD of Uber Australia and NZ, said the rollout “couldn’t be better timed”, with over 400,000 visitors expected at the hub this holiday period.

Etihad adds offsets

Etihad Airways has launched a new feature on its Etihad for Business (EYB) platform, allowing corporate clients to purchase carbon offsets directly through the portal.

The update, enabled through Etihad’s ongoing collaboration with CarbonClick, simplifies the process for organisations looking to advance their environmental goals while managing their business travel.

“This enhancement provides our corporate clients with a practical tool to assist in achieving their voluntary environmental commitments,” said VP Global Sales & Distribution, Javier Alija.

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Air NZ lounges around



AIR New Zealand has opened the Lookout Lounge at Auckland International Airport today, located on level two near the departure gates.

Featuring 200 seats, the new space will be available to Air New Zealand customers during the airport’s peak hours between 5-10am and 3.30-9.15pm, alongside the Koru Lounges, which will be completed in 2027.

Customers will be welcomed at either lounge depending on availability, with both serving up signature Kiwi hospitality.

Guests can expect a full buffet, a chef station serving made-to-order dishes that change throughout the day, and a fully serviced bar and barista station, stocked with New Zealand beer and wine, and premium coffee.

Taking inspiration from New Zealand’s Great Walks, The Lookout Lounge is designed with natural materials.

“As we head into our busiest

travel season, The Lookout Lounge will give our customers more space and comfort before they head overseas,” said Air NZ GM, Alisha Armstrong.

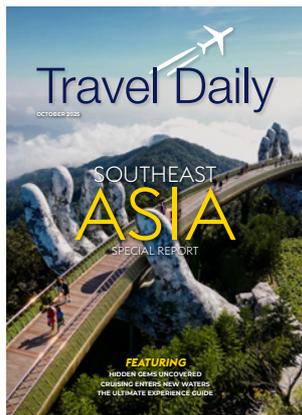
“It’s a friendly and relaxed environment influenced by the very best of Aotearoa.”

Construction of the new Koru Lounges at Auckland International Airport begins in 2026 and will take place in two phases.

The current lounge will remain open with reduced capacity while work is completed on the Koru Premier Lounge for Koru Platinum (currently Airpoints Elite), Koru Black, and Business Premier customers, due to open in 2027.

The current lounge space will then be redeveloped, with the refreshed Koru lounge expected to open by late 2027.

Both the Lookout Lounge and Koru Lounges will be integrated with the airline’s new Koru rewards program from Apr 2026 (*TD 19 Nov*). *JB/JM*



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Vietjet is reminding travellers to take advantage of its 'Double Day' sale today, which offers up to 100% discount (excluding taxes and fees) on millions of tickets across its domestic and international flight network. The promotion applies to flights scheduled between 05 Jan-31 Dec 2026 - enter code 'THANKS' **HERE** before 3am on Sat 13 Dec AEDT.

Cruisers can save up to 30% on more than 140 voyages with **Oceania Cruises**. The offer is available across all eight of the line's ships, including its newest vessel, *Oceania Allura*, until 05 Mar 2026 - **CLICK HERE**.

Voco Kirkton Park has unveiled a Hunter Valley Wine Escape package, which includes accommodation, daily gourmet breakfast for two, and tastings at boutique cellar doors, including Bonvilla Estate, Ivanhoe Winery, and Gundog Estate. Starting from \$359 per night (based on a two-night stay), the offer must be booked seven days prior to arrival - find out more **HERE**.

Aussies can now nab cheaper airfares to Noumea thanks to **Aircalin's** 'New Caledonia Summer Sale'. Travellers can fly direct from Sydney to Noumea from \$569 return, and from Brisbane to Noumea from \$579 return. The fares are available until 21 Dec, for travel dates between Feb and Nov 2026. See **HERE** for more information.

Crystalbrook has launched its Boxing Day sale, offering up to 30% off luxury stays across Australia. The promotion runs until 11 Jan 2026, with travel valid through 30 Oct 2026 and rates starting at \$207. Discover more information **HERE**.

In celebration of winning the Cruise Critic Best in Cruise Award for the third year in a row, **Swan Hellenic** is offering savings of up to \$2,000 per guest on 2026-27 cruises worldwide, booked by the end of Feb. The savings can be combined with up to \$500 onboard credit per person and free wi-fi upgrades, plus additional benefits for groups of eight guests and more. Learn more about the 'Elevated Expeditions' promotion **HERE**.

Collette has unveiled 'hot deals' on a range of tours departing in 2026, including the 14-day 'Exploring South Africa, Victoria Falls & Botswana'. Take advantage of the deals **HERE** by 31 Dec 2025.

Travellers can save on their next summer stay with **Pan Pacific Hotels Group**, which is offering up to 30% off rooms for Discovery members and 15% off for non-members across the group's six Australian hotels. The discounts apply to bookings made until 28 Feb 2026, for stays until 30 Sep. **CLICK HERE** to learn more.

Jetstar has launched an early Easter sale, which includes more than 115,000 discounted domestic fares from \$38 (e.g. Sydney to Ballina Byron) and international fares from \$149 (e.g. Perth to Bali). The promotion ends at 11.59pm AEDT Mon 15 Dec 2025, unless sold out prior. Find out more **HERE**.

Newcastle gets Edge

MORE than 4,000 passengers and crew will arrive in Newcastle tomorrow on board *Celebrity Edge*, which makes her maiden arrival into the city.

At 306 metres long, *Celebrity Edge* will be the largest cruise vessel by length to visit Newcastle this season, with passengers expected to enjoy a range of local attractions across the Hunter and Central Coast region.

"From wine tasting in the Hunter Valley, to getting up close with Australian wildlife on the Central Coast and Port Stephens, and exploring Newcastle's historic sites, this visit showcases why the region is a must-visit on Australia's cruise map," said Port Authority of NSW CEO John McKenna.

Alongside *Celebrity Edge*, around 14,000 passengers and crew will round out the summer cruise season for Newcastle.

MS The World, the world's largest private residential yacht, will be the next vessel to arrive on 19 Dec.

New Heathrow chair

LONDON Heathrow Airport's parent company Heathrow Airport Holdings Ltd has announced the appointment of Phillip Jansen as its new chairman, effective 01 Jan 2025.

Jansen is the Chair of British advertising network WPP, as well as formerly holding Chief Executive roles at BT Group, Worldpay Group and Sodexo.

"Heathrow is the UK's gateway to growth; therefore, I am delighted to be taking on the role as Chairman at this pivotal time for both the business and the country," Jansen said.

"I'm keenly aware of the instrumental role Heathrow plays in the success of the UK economy and I'm motivated to play my part in its future, helping to navigate the UK's hub as it looks to modernise and expand."

Jansen takes over from Lord Paul Deighton, who served in the role for nine years, which included steering the hub through the pandemic.

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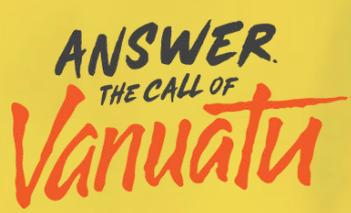


Treasures of the South Pacific

On Behalf of all the Treasures of the South Pacific, and our incredible partners, we wish you an amazing holiday season and look forward to seeing you in 2026.



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