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Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today features five pages of news, plus a cover wrap from **A Force for Good**, and a full page from **Treasures of the South Pacific**.

Croatia on foot

UNFORGETTABLE Croatia has announced the expansion of its land touring arm with two new private tours to complement its luxury cruises, in response to increased demand from long-haul travellers in Australia.

Designed for foodies, the 13-night 'Taste of Croatia & Slovenia' itinerary takes guests from Ljubljana to Zagreb, Split, Opatija, Sibenik and Dubrovnik.

Guests will sample regional delicacies such as "strukli", truffle, oysters, wines and the chance to learn how to cook like a local at a home cooking lesson.

One for culture vultures and history buffs, the other new offering is an 11-night 'Croatia Heritage Tour' operating from Zagreb to Dubrovnik between Apr and Oct.

Highlights include a visit to the Necktie Museum, a private wine and olive tasting with a traditional meal, and a 'Time travel back to Roman times' tour in Rovinj.

TOSP's happy hols

TREASURES of the South Pacific (TOSP) is wishing its partners happy holidays, as it looks forward to next year - head to **page six** for all the revelry.

TM fills corporate gap

TRAVELMANAGERS has introduced a new brand, Corporate Travel Specialists (CTS), designed to help corporate travel advisors and existing personal travel managers (PTMs) to expand their offering in the segment (**TD** breaking news).

The brand will offer an extensive suite of corporate-focused resources, including a new website, marketing collateral, corporate airfares, hotel and



car hire programs, as well as administrative support from a Corporate Operations Executive and business support from a dedicated corporate BDM.

CTS advisors and their clients will also benefit from TravelManagers' system of financial protections.

"Companies that already have in-house travel advisors or are looking to switch to our model, will also benefit from partnering with Corporate Travel Specialists in order to access our industry-leading systems and support," commented Operations Manager Troy Coelho.

"A new online booking tool will allow PTMs to create Amadeus Smart PNRs with mixed carriage, mixed fare content, plus hotel and cars in the same PNR."

CTS was announced to PTMs several weeks ago, with an invitation to register expressions of interest.

Coelho said the response so far has been positive, with 26 PTMs already opting into the CTS brand - three are trading solely as a corporate travel specialist, while the rest have chosen to dual brand.

Click **HERE** to check out the website for CTS. *JM*

HLO inks Qantas deal

HELLOWORLD has inked a new three-year agreement with Qantas, a deal the agency said will be worth around \$1.5 billion in total transaction value over the next three years.

While the latest agreement was hailed by Helloworld CEO Andrew Burnes as "clear recognition" by Qantas of the critical role that agents play in the distribution, the terms of commissions model were not disclosed in the update to the ASX this morning.

"While there's been much speculation over the last few years about cuts in agent commission, we've always enjoyed a very positive relationship with Qantas, and this new deal clearly identifies the strategic importance of the agent networks in ANZ," he said.

Qantas CEO of International Cam Wallace added the agreement was a "great outcome" for both parties.

Force is with you

A FORCE For Good is coming up in Mar, with bookings open now for two events next year.

The main event will take place on 06 Mar, with networking drinks on 05 Mar - **cover page**.

No Bali Airbnb ban

INDONESIA'S Ministry of Tourism has rejected Bali Governor Wayan Koster's move to ban Airbnb.

The proposal caused panic across the tourism sector, however the Tourism Ministry has stepped in to confirm Airbnb an essential business partner, reported *The Bali Sun*.

Governor Koster had concerns that some properties registered on Airbnb are not paying sufficient taxes, and could have violated building regulations and spatial planning laws.

Whistler campaign

ENTIRE Travel Group is offering savings of up to \$600 per couple in its new Whistler Summer Escapes program.

The campaign, launched in partnership with Tourism Whistler, highlights the region's spectacular scenery, fresh mountain air, and endless outdoor activities.

Travellers can access a variety of itineraries through the package, including multi-day escapes, guided hiking and biking tours, the Peak 2 Peak Gondola experience, and more - **HERE**.

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Agents' US proposal worries

EXCLUSIVE

A RECENT proposal by the US Government to probe the social media histories of inbound travellers (TD 11 Dec) will ultimately have an impact on the confidence of Aussie travellers.

That is the opinion of several travel agency owners who recently spoke with *Travel Daily*, including itravel Carlingford owner Emily Todorovski, who conceded perception alone would do damage to bookings.

"Unfortunately, negativity regarding privacy and leadership is causing many travellers to second-guess their choices in travelling to the States, and a lot of this is through peer and media fear mongering," she said.

Argyle Travel and Cruise founder Naome Burdon agreed, stating the proposed changes would negatively impact decisions.

"Travellers value convenience and a seamless experience, and any perceived barriers or added complexity may lead them to consider alternative destinations.

"It will likely make the United States harder to sell...and it will continue to affect clients' choices of airline when en route to other destinations like Canada, where LAX may have normally provided a suitable connection."

Complex Travel Group founder Mark Trim said that while he had observed some "additional fear creep" from clients around ESTA applications, the latest proposal was unlikely to shift the needle



for a vocal minority of Aussies who have already made their minds up about US travel.

"Whether [this cohort] are actually going to go to the US or not, they are including notes with their bookings advising they want to avoid the US altogether - which has been persistent throughout the year," Trim explained.

"Given those potential visitors were likely already turned off, it's unlikely that the social media requirements are something that does further damage to the most sensitive part of this market."

More broadly across the client base, Trim said he expected there to be a short-term drop in sentiment around coverage in the news cycle, followed by a period of acceptance once people see that the US is still open to Australian travellers without punitive investigations.

He said one possible way of injecting more confidence into the US may lie with the travel suppliers, which could encourage bookings with more flexibility, should trouble with ESTA applications arise. AB/JB

Go English with Touropa



TOUROPA has released Europamundo's new 'Go English' product line, offering travellers more than 120 tours operated exclusively in English.

"Go English! responds directly to what many travellers have been asking for - a seamless, 100% English-guided experience, without compromising [our] efficiency, value, or global reach," commented Berend L. Christian, Director of Corporate Planning at Europamundo Vacations.

Available now to travellers and agents across Australia and New Zealand, Europamundo touring will be available in two different formats, based on language preference and travel style.

Go English! features tours operated exclusively in English with weekly departures from Apr to Oct, taking place in high-demand destinations such as Europe and Japan.

Meanwhile, the company offers more than 950 English-speaking tours around the world, operated

all year to destinations across Europe, Asia, the Middle East and Americas, where guests will travel in coaches occasionally shared with other language groups - click **HERE** for more. JHM

TG bag changes

THAI Airways is overhauling its baggage allowance system, which will be based on the number of luggage pieces instead of weight, for all flights starting next year.

The new system allows international and domestic passengers to check in a specific number of bags based on the class of travel.

The policy is applicable to all ticket sales, ticket issuance and reissuance of unused tickets for travel on or after 02 Mar 2026.

For example, international passengers in Royal First Class are eligible for three pieces weighing 32kg each, while those in economy class flex can carry two pieces at 23kg each.

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EMERALD Cruises is offering free return economy flights to Europe on select 2027 sailings, including the popular 15-day 'Splendours of Europe' itinerary.

Prices start from \$7,545 per person including flights, with departures available in Feb, Mar, Oct and Nov 2027.

The offer is available to Australian travellers flying out of Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide, Brisbane and Perth.

Stays in Shizuoka

JAPAN'S lesser-known prefecture of Shizuoka, which is gaining traction among Aussie travellers, has announced several fresh accommodation offerings.

From Mar 2026, visitors can stay at the new Nikengoya Lodge, which offers a quiet, nature-based retreat in the mountains.

Also opening next year is Shijima Atami, a small luxe hotel, and Hamamatsu Marriott Hotel.

Schwab tears into CTM

THE auditing scandal currently plaguing Corporate Travel Management (CTM) leaves no way for the business to survive, according to Luxury Escapes CEO Adam Schwab.

Taking to LinkedIn to comment on CTM's predicament, Schwab said that given the business is currently in breach of IATA rules that required audited accounts by 30 Sep, it may also be insolvent.

"IATA run a tight ship, to continue trading CTM will need to lodge a very significant deposit potentially upwards of \$100 million, if not more," he said.

"So in reality, CTM would have available cash of \$50 million [and] need to urgently refund customers - including the UK Government - \$162 million before penalties/interest".

Schwab also suggested a capital raise is no longer a viable option for CTM given its likely share price drop, labelling the share



value dilution "extreme".

"CTM's only hope is trading through it," he said.

"But in their last reported half it had operating cash flows of \$12 million even after failing to refund \$50 million-plus from customers, so in reality, the business may have been losing money for years.

"Not only that, customers will be fleeing for Flight Centre [because] corporates pay CTM who then pay airlines and are taking a huge risk if it goes under because they may become unsecured creditors". *AB*

Pax pollution risk

AIR passengers are being exposed to extremely high levels of ultrafine particle pollution, a new French study has revealed.

The research team found that the greatest concentrations of ultrafine particles - which are not covered by air pollution laws - were measured during the boarding and taxiing process.

Exposure to ultrafine particles over several years has been linked to early deaths, including from lung cancer.

Voyager back in Oz

ROYAL Caribbean's *Voyager of the Seas* has made her debut in Brisbane, where she will homeport for the first time.

The ship will offer 20 holidays, ranging from three-night weekend getaways to 12-night adventures across Queensland and the South Pacific, including the debut of six Wiggly-themed voyages (*TD* 12 Mar).



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NZ cruise deployment boost

A NEW in-water cleaning solution to help clean cruise ships has been approved to roll out in Auckland this summer, with the technology expected to make a difference to deployment for the 2027-28 season.

Co-developed by Port of Auckland and the government, the innovation targets hard-to-clean areas of vessel hulls such as sea chests and propeller shafts.

New Zealand Cruise Association CEO Jacqui Lloyd (pictured) is "thrilled" with the news.

"[Cruise lines] needed a safety net so that if they were on their way here and part of the ship needed a tidy-up, they would be able to do that safely within New Zealand waters and in a way that wouldn't affect their ongoing itineraries and visitor experience - this is the solution," she told *TD*.

"Our solution provides certainty for cruise and shipping lines," said Chris Mills, General Manager at



Port of Auckland.

"It's an additional service that we can provide to shipping lines in the rare instance where there is the need for spot cleaning."

CLIA Australasia MD Joel Katz applauded the approval of the biofouling solution.

"Together with its members and industry partners, CLIA has consistently advocated for greater certainty in the application of biofouling requirements in NZ, and welcomes efforts by the Government and industry stakeholders...to create a positive environment to support cruise tourism," he said. *JHM*

Death penalty coming

THE Maldives will impose the death penalty on tourists caught with any kind illicit substance from Mar 2026.

Even travellers bringing in medical cannabis with a doctor's certificate will be deemed illegal under the changes, and may be charged with drug trafficking resulting in fines, deportation, life without parole or death.

The change was passed to tackle drug-related crime.

TIME for Travelpay

TIME has announced a new partnership with online payment solution Travelpay.

"Partnerships like this strengthen our program, expand opportunities for our mentees, and reinforce the incredible collaborative spirit that underpins the Australian travel community," Time Chair Penny Spencer said.

Travelpay joins partners such as Cover-More, CATO and more.



Window Seat

SOME people say New York City's John F. Kennedy International is slower than a plough horse at dusk, but one equine passenger has taken that idiom a little too far.

Authorities were rushed into action when an escaped horse paid a visit to the airport on Long Island.

Witnesses captured video of the horse running loose through traffic on the Van Wyck Expressway, before taking the exit ramp for JFK, and making its way onto airport property.

The horse was captured after taking a liking to one of the officers and receiving a pat.



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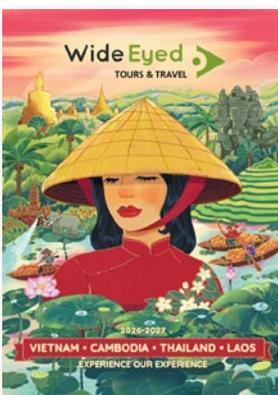
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Viva Holidays - Hawaii 2026/27
Viva Holidays has announced the release of its 2026/27 Hawaii brochure, where travellers will discover a wide range of accommodation options to suit all budgets and tastes, along with touring and car hire to help them explore the beauty of the Hawaiian Islands. Experiences from outlet shopping and sunset cruises to island hopping adventures and many more are featured across 36 pages, offering travel packages that will inspire your clients to plan their next tropical getaway to Hawaii. The brochure can be accessed online via Viva Holidays' website, **HERE**.



Atlas Ocean Voyages - Antarctic 2027/28
Atlas Ocean Voyages is showcasing its new collection of all-inclusive Antarctic expeditions from Oct 2027 to Mar 2028 in its latest brochure. The program will see two of the line's polar-class expedition ships, *World Navigator* and *World Traveller* offer six expedition packages to the great white continent from nine to 13 nights. The brochure also highlights two festive sailings in Dec 2027, inviting guests to experience the excitement of a unique white Christmas in Antarctica as well as indulgent New Year celebrations on board - learn more **HERE**.



Wide Eyed Tours & Travel 2026/27
Wide Eyed Tours & Travel, a leading destination management company across Vietnam, Cambodia, Thailand, and Laos, has unveiled its new 2026/27 brochure, highlighting 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. Take a look at the digital brochure **HERE**, which can be viewed in Australian currency.

HX touches down in MEL



HONG Kong Airlines began operating flights to and from Melbourne Airport over the weekend, after the route was confirmed in Jul (**TD** 23 Jul).

The carrier will operate the new route three times a week using an Airbus A330.

Melbourne's Hong Kong route is already the fourth-busiest route for Melbourne Airport, with an additional 93,000 seats to be added annually with Hong Kong Airlines' launch.

The Asian carrier will compete with Qantas and Cathay Pacific on the popular route.

Melbourne Airport's Chief of Aviation Jim Parashos saluted recent regulation changes that have paved the way for Hong Kong Airlines becoming Melbourne Airport's 41st carrier.

"The recent expansion of bilateral air traffic rights between Hong Kong and Australia by the Federal Government played a key role in bringing this service to Melbourne which will contribute millions of dollars to the local economy," he said.

Parashos added that he was grateful to see the carrier joining in time for the airport's busiest holiday season.

"There are now more airline groups flying between Melbourne and Hong Kong than there are flying most Australian domestic routes, so it's no surprise that consumers are making the most of the increased choice to head overseas or to come and explore Australia," he said. *JB*

Scout with Air India

AIR India has signed a new interline agreement with Singapore Airlines' budget carrier Scoot, which will seek the Indian carrier's global network - including Australia.

Passengers flying with Air India can now take onward flights with Scoot via Singapore from the hubs of Delhi, Mumbai, or Chennai through a single booking.

The tie-up is part of Air India's strategy to add more seamless value to customers seeking to travel to Asia and APAC.

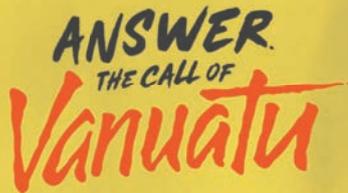


Treasures of the South Pacific

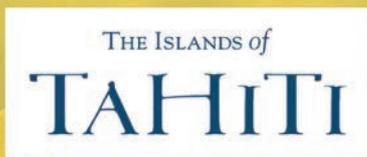
On Behalf of all the Treasures of the South Pacific, and our incredible partners, we wish you an amazing holiday season and look forward to seeing you in 2026.



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