

Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today features six pages of the latest news, a special feature from **AAT Kings**, a product profile from **Norwegian Cruise Line** and a full page from **Tourism NT**.

Galloway's new gig

GLOBAL Managing Director - **Luxury and Independent Brands** for Flight Centre Travel Group, Danielle Galloway, has joined the board of full service travel and tour provider SportsLink Travel.

The FCTG executive arrives on the board alongside President of the Confederation of Australian Sport, Ned Coten.

The two prominent travel leaders have been brought on to guide the brand through further growth, including refining domestic and int'l connections and improving the business structure.

IE doesn't like Mon

SOLOMON Airlines has temporarily cancelled flights between Brisbane and Honiara on Mondays effective from 17 Feb to 24 Mar 2025.

The airline's Commercial Schedule Change policy will apply to affected travellers, who can rebook onto the next available flight or obtain a credit or refund for the cancelled service, with credits valid for 12 months.

Agents are invited to contact Airline Rep Services' Agency and Customer Support Team for further assistance - [CLICK HERE](#).

Riverside docks Down Under

ANOTHER river cruise brand is looking to make a splash in the Australian market, with Germany-based Riverside Luxury Cruises putting direct boots on the ground for the first time.

Susie Coughlin (**pictured**) has been appointed as the brand's Commercial Sales & Marketing representative for Australia and New Zealand, where she will be based in Melbourne.

Coughlin is well known to the industry, having spent more than two decades with APT Travel Group, before jumping across to CruiseCo in 2018.

Most recently, she was the Regional Sales Manager Vic/Tas/SA/NT at Globus family of brands Australasia, departing the business in Sep 2023.

In her new role, Coughlin will be charged with raising the profile of Riverside Luxury Cruises in the local market, as the German brand seeks to increase its sales market share Down Under.

"Susie comes to us with a wealth of river cruising experience," the company said, adding the new recruit is now open to conversations regarding commercial agreements, agency

Kings of the short break

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registrations, and in person and on-line training.

Reflecting on her new position, Coughlin said she is looking forward to pursuing her passion for river cruising in Australia.

"I am very grateful to be given the opportunity to bring my experience and expertise in this area to the Riverside family and give this true luxury product the local attention it deserves," Coughlin said.

Agencies wanting to register on Riverside's travel agent portal can do so by [CLICKING HERE](#). AB

Adventures take off

TRAVELLERS can again explore Australia from above with the relaunch of private touring brand, Adventure by Air.

The revitalised brand employs a fleet of private aircraft, whether fixed-wing, helicopter, seaplane or high-speed luxury jet, to take guests on bespoke itineraries to urban and remote centres across the country.

In the captain's seat is travel industry entrepreneur and Crooked Compass founder, Lisa Pagotto, with the business relaying her passion for authentic, meaningful travel, bespoke itineraries and personalised on-ground experiences.

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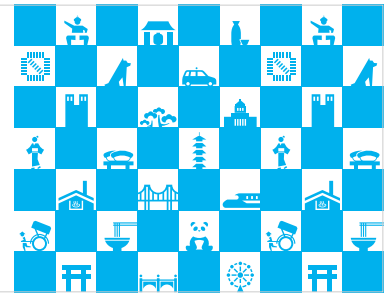
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Cover More

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\$1 billion of events locked in for Australia

AUSTRALIA is growing its reputation as a top destination for lucrative international business events through Tourism Australia's Business Events Bid Fund Program, which has now helped lock in more than \$1 billion worth of int'l events.

The major milestone was announced today at the annual Asia-Pacific Incentives and Meetings Event in Melbourne, with the Victorian capital one of the largest beneficiaries.

Melbourne will be the host of 'Women Deliver' in Apr 2026, which will bring in 6,000 international delegates to the city, worth approximately \$31m.

The event is one of more than 160 which the Bid Fund has helped secure since 2018.

Other major events secured include the Amway China Leadership Summit this Apr, welcoming 10,000 international



attendees to Melbourne, worth \$30 million; and the International Astronautical Congress this Sep, attracting 2,500 international delegates to Sydney worth approximately \$20 million.

The latest business events data from Tourism Research Australia showed international business events contributed more than \$4 billion to the Australian economy last year.

"The Bid Fund Program is helping Aussie businesses beat the competition, and attract first class events which are a boon for the economy," Minister for

Tourism Don Farrell said.

"The business events sector was hard hit by the pandemic but its recovery is strong.

"We are securing a pipeline of events which are worth hundreds of millions of dollars to Australia's economy, and will support a range of businesses."

Tourism Australia Managing Director Phillipa Harrison (pictured) said the program has played a crucial role in helping Australia to host more than 150 new international business events since 2018.

"It is a competitive industry with destinations around the world vying for lucrative events and the Bid Fund offers vital support at the critical bidding stage.

"We are so pleased the Bid Fund has now helped to attract \$1 billion worth of international business events and continues to secure events out to 2029." MS

DNSW aims high

DESTINATION NSW (DNSW) is targeting high-yield business events at AIME 2025, in its effort to drive new growth opportunities in the state's business events sector.

DNSW will join 40 state visitor economy businesses at the event from 10-12 Feb, which will bring together more than 570 exhibitors and 3,500 attendees.

The DMO is partnering with Business Events Sydney to bolster NSW's reputation as Australia's premier business events destination, leveraging the 'Corporate events that feel anything but' brand positioning.

Tourism Research Australia data showed events generated \$561m in overnight visitor spend in NSW for the year ending Sep.



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ALBATROSS
Tours

Window Seat

IT'S not quite *Goldilocks and the Three Bears*, but a guest staying at the Boulevard 17 Hotel in the Dutch city of Vlissingen recently returned to their room to find a grey seal taking a nap on the floor.

Hotel staff called the Zeeland Animal Welfare Foundation, which worked to retrieve the animal and return it to a more familiar habitat, with the help of the Sea Animal Rescue Team Netherlands.

According to rescuers, the seal put up a bit of a fight during the relocation process, which they described as typical for a creature "who had become quite grumpy due to his disturbed beauty sleep".

Pan Am back in air

AN ICONIC name in aviation is set to return, with Pan Am Airways to relaunch as a private aircraft tour operation.

Pan American World Airways will return to the sky from 16-28 Jun with a 12-day private jet itinerary available to 50 pax and visiting Bermuda, Portugal, France, England and Ireland, taking off from New York JFK.

The branded itinerary will be operated by private jet business Bartelings and Criterion Travel, with round-trip prices starting from US\$59,950pp twin share.

The company is also inviting aviation enthusiasts to name its first Clipper aircraft ahead of departure, which it describes as a tradition dating back to the 1800s.

[CLICK HERE](#) for more details.

Setback for VA in replacing Hrdlicka

THE Transport Workers Union (TWU) has been granted its wish of seeing Virgin Australia change course on who will be its next CEO, with Paul Jones (pictured) bowing out of the race on Fri.

VA's current Chief Customer Officer was the frontrunner to replace outgoing chief Jayne Hrdlicka, however it appears Jones, and owners Bain Capital, have succumbed to mounting pressure from the TWU and a handful of politicians, who have lobbied strenuously for the former Qantas executive to be dropped from succession plans.

The stakes are high for VA, which still needs to have final approvals granted for its resumption of long-haul flying with partner Qatar Airways.

In Dec, the TWU National Secretary Michael Kaine penned a letter to Bain Capital (TD 02 Dec 2024) to express reservations about Jones' potential appointment as CEO, calling out his role in a Qantas decision to sack workers that was later found to be illegal (TD 21 Oct 2024).

Kaine also threatened to withdraw support for VA's Qatar deal if Jones was appointed.

In a brief statement issued late last week, VA confirmed that Jones will not be the company's next CEO, and that it is yet to make a final decision on Jayne Hrdlicka's successor.

The statement also followed thinly-veiled criticism last week from Federal Employment Minister Murray Watt, who stated the government will be paying close attention to who succeeds Hrdlicka as it weighs up rubber stamping the Qatar Airways deal.



"Most Australians would like to see Virgin choose a CEO with a demonstrated record of putting their workers and the public first," Watt said.

Reacting to the news of Jones dropping out of the race, TWU leader Michael Kaine said he hopes the move spelled the end of Bain's dalliance with "a potential Alan Joyce model of adversarial industrial relations".

"It was disturbing in the extreme that Bain Capital would even have contemplated

appointing one of the key instigators of the illegal sackings of 1,800 workers at Qantas."

With Jones now out of contention, the most prominent remaining internal candidates include VA's Head of Velocity Frequent Flyer Nick Rohrlack, CFO Race Strauss, and Chief Operating Officer Stuart Aggs.

However, when Hrdlicka announced her shock departure in Feb last year (TD 21 Feb 2024), the airline stated it was open to recruiting an external replacement, including from the pool of talent based overseas. AB

TTNQ bookings plea

CAIRNS and Tropical North Queensland have been spared the worst of the rain and floods that have acutely impacted parts of Queensland, but that has not stopped a wave of cancellations across the region.

A spokesperson for Tourism Tropical North Queensland (TTNQ) said: "There is a perception the flooding has affected the entire north - which is incorrect."

"Tours are operating and it has been sunny for a few days now although we are still getting the traditional summer evening and overnight rain."

Townsville Airport has also confirmed it is open and operational after flood activity.

The worst affected areas for flooding in Queensland have been Cardwell and Ingham.

Last Fri, all flights were cancelled at Whitsunday Coast Airport amid flood waters cutting of roads (TD breaking news).

Renaissance returns

RENAISSANCE Tours Australia has signed on once again with PEPR Agency to handle its PR and media relations for 2025.

The special interest experience tour operator has developed a new series of classical music and opera tours in Europe, each led by a subject matter expert.

These include an adventure into Northern Europe to enjoy four world-class operas in Hamburg, Copenhagen and Oslo, led by music specialist Phillip Sametz.

Artist and designer Claudia Chan Shaw will also lead an art-themed tour to Paris, Brussels and Prague.

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Aussies farewell *Explorer*



IT WAS a melancholy feeling for many in the cruise industry last Fri, as Carnival Corporation's *Pacific Explorer* departed Australian shores for the last time in Fremantle.

The high-profile vessel has been entertaining Australian passengers under the P&O Australia moniker since 2017, before that operating as *Dawn Princess* for sister Carnival brand Princess Cruises.

Her departure marks a major milestone for Carnival in Australia, which in Jun last year made the decision to phase out the P&O brand and fold operations into its mainline Carnival brand (TD 04 Jun 2024).

More than 2,200 guests are on the final *Explorer* sailing from Fremantle, who will take part in an onboard farewell cocktail party on 12 Feb to send the ship out in style.

The event will be hosted by the ship's captain, with the party to relay *Explorer's* contribution to cruising in Australia.

When contacted for comment, a spokesperson for Carnival kept the focus on the positive future the cruise line will offer with four branded ships in Australia.

"The majority of our dedicated P&O team will be joining the Carnival Cruise Line family and look forward to welcoming guests

on future voyages on board *Carnival Adventure, Carnival Encounter, Carnival Splendor* and *Carnival Luminosa*," Carnival said.

Pacific Explorer will soon undergo a \$50 million renovation and rebranding to *Star Voyager*, to be operated by Resorts World Cruises from Mar in Asia.

The P&O brand will formally come to end when *Pacific Encounter* completes her final three voyages from Brisbane later this month. AB

FCBT grant returns

FLIGHT Centre Business Travel (FCBT) - Australia has returned its Corporate Travel Grant for another year, giving local businesses the opportunity to win a \$30,000 grand prize and \$10,000 in travel credit, to be shared across four runners-up.

Partners supporting the program this year include Virgin Australia; IHG Hotels & Resorts; Hertz; and Trees4Travel.

"At FCBT we are all about supporting and investing in our SME partnerships, hence why our Corporate Travel Grant campaign has gone from strength to strength," Global Leader FCBT and Specialist Brands Cameron Harris said.

Find out more details on the 2025 program [HERE](#).

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S Korea is ready to pop

EXCLUSIVE

BOOKINGS for South Korea are starting to gain serious traction in the Aussie market for the first time, Inside Travel Group co-founder Alastair Donnelly recently revealed to *Travel Daily*.

It is not before time for the cultural adventure expert either, which wanted to inject major investment into the market over 20 years ago, but found the destination was not mature enough to be viable.

"When we first looked at the market around 2005...there was nobody in South Korea who really understood what we were trying to do, so it just wasn't the right moment," Donnelly explained.

"So we waited and waited and then Psy released *Gangnam Style*, we thought, 'this is the moment for Korea's big break', it has two billion YouTube views, but it still didn't really happen.

"I think the big turning point for S Korea though was the film *Parasite*...it was a symbolic moment that made the country cross over into the mainstream."

While South Korea is enjoying

a star vehicle moment culturally on the back of shows like *Squid Game* and K-Pop, in the process piquing travel interest from Australia and beyond, Donnelly feels the country is ripe for the type of tours it runs that really get under the skin of the destinations.

"South Korea is really an interesting place because nobody can tell you any sites," he said.

"Other than the DMZ, no one can tell you anything about Korea, but they all say, 'I really want to go', and it feels similar to where Japan was in 2000.

"One of the key parts of our cultural benchmark is the 'slice of everyday local life'."

An example of the deep diving that Inside Travel Group does on its tours in South Korea includes rare culinary adventures its specialists uncover.

One such example of this is a North Korean restaurant located away from the main streets.

"We are going to help travellers and hold their hand just enough so that they have the full confidence to engage and explore," Donnelly said. AB

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SESSION

Leading for growth: Practical strategies for business owners



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TOP 5 TERRITORY ADVENTURES FOR UNDER \$2,000 PER PERSON

ACCORDING to a recent AAT Kings survey, more than half of Aussies who are taking trips this year are planning shorter getaways of a week or less, with the cost-of-living pressures playing a role in travel decisions.

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TOP 5 NT SHORT BREAKS FOR UNDER \$2,000 PER PERSON

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Your clients could be enjoying a mesmerising sunset at Uluru while sipping on sparkling wine, followed up with a sunrise at Kata Tjuta as their driver guide takes them through a journey of discovery spanning stunning valleys and canyons.

2. Red Centre Highlights - Four days from \$1,779pp*

Kata Tjuta Sunset, Kings Canyon, Uluru, Walpa Gorge and the Field of Light - your clients will see it all.

3. Kakadu and Arnhem Land Explorer - Three days from \$1,979pp*

Clients will discover Aboriginal rock art, cruise the Yellow Water Billabong and explore Arnhem

Land and the Mikinj Valley by 4WD connecting with Aboriginal culture.

4. Kakadu and Nitmiluk (Katherine) Gorge - Three days from \$1,759pp*

Your clients will cruise Nitmiluk (Katherine) Gorge, swim in Edith's cascading waterfall, and spot wildlife on the Yellow Water Billabong - this tour is the best of the Top End.

5. Kakadu and Tiwi Island Explorer - Three days from

\$1,775pp*

The Wurrumiyanga Aboriginal community will take your clients on an unforgettable journey through their remote community, rich history and culture.

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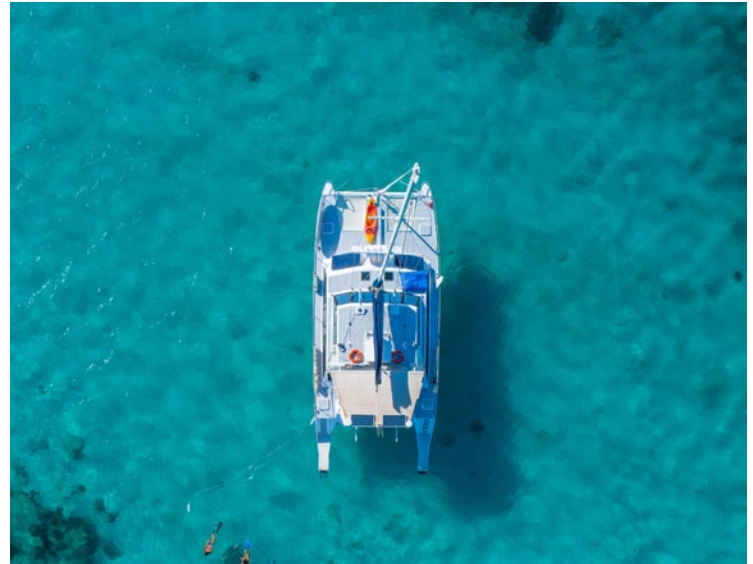
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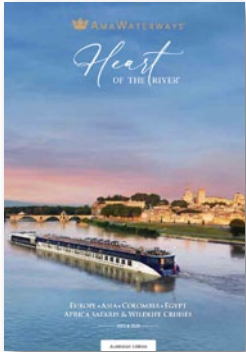
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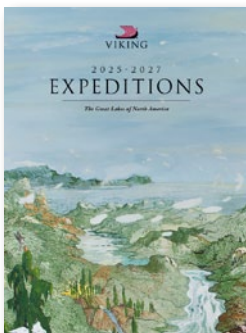
AmaWaterways - Heart of the River 2025/26
AmaWaterways has launched a dedicated brochure for the Australian market, detailing the river cruise line's itineraries in Europe, Asia, Egypt, Africa and Colombia for the next two years. The new format is easier to read and provides new features, including a large river map, a foldout reference guide with dates for all itineraries, a section dedicated to land packages as well as more detail on each journey and their key selling points. Readers will find itineraries sailing the Dutch and Belgian waterways; the waterways of France;

the Mekong River; the Nile River; the Magdalena River; African safari and wildlife cruises; and more. View the brochure [HERE](#).



The Hotel Connection - European Collection
Boutique Melbourne-based marketing agency, The Hotel Connection, has published a new brochure showcasing an exclusive collection of luxury travel experiences in the UK, Europe, Morocco and Dubai. The 22-page guide highlights premium accommodation and experiences across must-visit cities like London, Manchester, Edinburgh, Paris, Barcelona, France, Italy, Tuscany, Greece, and many more. For example, readers can learn about Cheval Phoenix House in Chelsea, which

re-opened last year following a full refurbishment, and The Pavillion de Lettres, Paris' original literary boutique hotel. Read it [HERE](#).



Viking - 2025-2027 Expeditions
Viking is highlighting its new Great Lakes voyages in one of its latest brochures. Agents and their clients can get all the details on itineraries like the eight-day 'Great Lakes Treasures' roundtrip from Milwaukee, which sails the largest freshwater system in the world. Guests will explore the islands of the Georgian Bay Biosphere Reserve; venture out to Flowerpot Island in the Fathom Five National Marine Park and see the pink granite isles of the Benjamin Islands; and participate

in lab studies as they explore coastal wetlands and delve into the native cultures of the Great Lakes. Call 138 747 to request a brochure.

Envoyage debuts in S Africa



FLIGHT Centre's burgeoning independent brand Envoyage has completed its global checklist, launching in S Africa and marking its entry into five key markets.

The network's African presence is headed by General Manager Chantal Gouws, who welcomed guests to a soiree to celebrate the brand's arrival.

"The introduction of Envoyage to the South African market significantly strengthens our network and cultivates a vibrant community of travel entrepreneurs, both locally and globally," Gouws said.

"With Envoyage, we will not only elevate our current offerings, but also unveil a wealth of new and exciting opportunities for those who choose to join us on this journey."

Speaking at the group's welcome function, Gouws added that the new brand's market proposition is "compelling, memorable and versatile".

"Our research tells us Envoyage conjures up an air of prestige,

a feeling of security and an immediate association with travel and personalisation, so it truly embodies everything our independent division is about."

The launch of Envoyage in Africa completes the group's initial global rollout, with Australia, New Zealand, USA, Canada and UK already operational.

Flight Centre Travel Group Global Leisure CEO, James Kavanagh, said Envoyage will allow the group to continue to nurture the "huge potential" it sees in the independent agent space and the role the company expects it to play in its future business model.

Africa will be front and centre for the group later this year as it welcomes representatives from around the world as host nation for the group's annual Worldwide 2025 event, which will take place at the famous Sun City Resort. *ML*

Gouws is **pictured** above second from left with FCTG South Africa MD Euan McNeil and senior members of the Envoyage team.

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Wednesday 12 February 1.00pm (AEST) | 11.30pm (ACST) | 3.00pm (NZST)

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Sun will return for a six-month season between October 2025 and March 2026, with a choice of six departure ports.

Later next year, from October 2026 – April 2027, Norwegian Jade will embark on a seven-month season where your clients can choose from four popular homeports, including Tokyo, Incheon, Hong Kong, and Singapore. Guests will be able to enjoy highlights such as cherry blossom season in Japan, late-night departures in Osaka and Kanazawa, and overnight stays in Hong Kong. Book before 18 February and your clients can save up to 50% off their cruise fare* as well as receive US\$200 onboard credit*. Plus, they can enjoy the best value at sea with NCL's More at Sea™,

including unlimited premium beverages*, specialty dining*, Wi-Fi* and more.

*Conditions apply.

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Partners First Rewards members can earn **DOUBLE POINTS*** on all sailings from 3 – 13 February 2025. If you haven't already, start your rewards journey with NCL today and experience how fast and simple it is to earn & redeem points!
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