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### Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today features 10 pages of news, including our **Sustainability** page plus a full page from **Silversea**.

### VA gets another tick

**THE** Department of Infrastructure, Transport Regional Development has confirmed that Virgin Australia's proposed deal with Qatar Airways is allowed for under the Australia-Qatar bilateral air service agreements.

Responding to a letter from the International Air Services Commission, the body added that the Australian carrier will need to apply to the Department for timetable approval to operate the proposed Doha services with Qatar under the *Air Navigation Regulation 2016 Act*.

Approval of the timetable will be only granted if VA meets safety and security requirements.

### Wild Bush appoints

**SALES** and marketing specialist firm Unique Tourism Collection has been appointed by Wild Bush Luxury to promote its adventure itineraries to the travel trade.

Unique Tourism Collection will develop sales strategies, training and incentives for the brand, harnessing relationships with new and existing trade partners.

Wild Bush Luxury operates safari-style camps in remote parts of Australia including Bamurru Plains in the Northern Territory and Maria Island in Tasmania.

## Advisors wanted for USA

**BRAND** USA has announced the launch of its inaugural retail agent Ambassador Panel in Australia and New Zealand - a first-of-its-kind program for the destination marketing organisation globally.

Unveiled at Brand USA's New Zealand Travel Trade Expo in Auckland last night, the initiative will offer a unique opportunity for 12 Australian and New Zealand retail agents to become "champions of the USA".

The 12-month program, which officially begins on 02 Apr, will see the selected agents play an essential role in the organisation's mission to promote the USA as a diverse travel destination.

The panel appointees will share insights and provide valuable feedback on travel trends impacting the USA, with their contributions to help shape local training programs and initiatives; in return, agents will gain access to exclusive mentoring opportunities, specialised training,

and a famil trip to the USA.

"This program represents an incredible opportunity for the retail agent community, and we're looking for 12 exceptional agents who are not just dreamers, but doers - excited about learning, sharing and growing in the travel industry," said Malcolm Smith, Senior VP, Global Markets & Chief Trade and Product Development Officer at Brand USA.

The program is supported by Air New Zealand as the exclusive airline partner.

"The USA is an important and growing market for us, and this program will be an incredible opportunity for agents to experience not only some amazing destinations but also our Air New Zealand product and service," stated the carrier's CCO, Jeremy O'Brien.

Interested retail agents can apply **HERE** before 07 Mar, with the selected panel members to be announced in late Mar. *JM*

### Silversea's reasons

**SAVINGS** of up to \$8,000 per suite across more than 500 voyages are now in market from luxury cruise brand Silversea.

The offer applies to selected sailings globally on its newest vessels, *Silver Ray* and *Silver Nova*. More details on **page 11**.

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## UK's generational change

EXCLUSIVE

**GREAT** Britain cannot continue to rely on Australia's traditional loyalty for VFR traveller markets as the national demographic becomes more multicultural, its top inbound tourism body says.

Speaking to *Travel Daily* in London, VisitBritain Chairman Nick Du Bois (pictured) said the migration of first- and second-generation Asian people to Australia presents Britain with long-term challenges to refine and enhance its appeal.

Du Bois said despite this gradual generational shift, he is confident Australia's love affair with the UK will remain strong.

"There's clearly a love and an appetite to come to Britain, and I think that's an important start, but it's not anything to be complacent about," Du Bois said.

"We're looking forward to seeing about £1.7 billion of spend [from Australia] in 2025 and we've got visitors up to about 1.2 million for 2025 so it's going all going in the right direction.

UK Tourism Minister Sir Chris Bryant has set the tourism sector a target of welcoming 50 million visitors annually by 2030, with the current tally at 38.5 million.

"We're going to have to work harder and we're going to have to do more," Du Bois said.

The country recently launched 'Starring Great Britain' (TD 29 Jan) as a new cornerstone of its global tourism marketing effort, with the primary objective of highlighting



new tourism products.

"Now we're using film, we're using TV as a hook, and it's a hook to tell the story of Britain today, from exploring our vibrant cities, our world class attractions, and the stunning countryside.

"Last year, we produced more films here than even in Hollywood, and this is a wonderful opportunity for us to show - on top of our exciting contemporary culture - our hospitality, because Starring Great Britain inspires visitors to put themselves literally in the picture," Du Bois added. *ML*

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## Rocky deal extends

**ROCKY** Mountaineer has extended the book-by dates for its 'Explore in 2025' promotion, which features discounts on selected multi-day packages.

Travellers can enjoy savings of \$2,350 per couple on SilverLeaf Plus for the 'Rockies to the Red Rocks' adventure.

Further north, a price cut of \$1,650 per couple is active on GoldLeaf bookings on multi-day packages for the 'Journey through the Clouds', 'First Passage to the West' and 'Rainforest to Gold Rush' itineraries, with smaller discounts on SilverLeaf seating.



## Ormina trains Sicily

**AGENTS** are invited to join a free webinar to learn more about the Italian island of Sicily.

Taking place on 19 Feb at 4pm AEDT, the 30-minute session is the latest in a series of webinars planned by Ormina to boost knowledge of European cities.

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## Freelance famil host

**EXPERIENCED** travel writers Fiona Harper and Carolyne Jasinski have joined forces to launch a freelance famil hosting service aimed at tourism boards.

The new TravHost operation draws on the pair's experience about what makes a successful famil for travel and media reps, and pledges to help businesses achieve maximum exposure through media opportunities.

Rates start at A\$800 per day, plus GST, for a famil host with value-add options including pre-famil planning and post-reporting.

Co-founder Fiona Harper said the business has access to experienced professionals who can help facilitate story angles.

"We address the challenges tourism organisations face in hosting media and trade famils by providing dedicated, professional hosts with extensive travel expertise," Harper said.

"It's a win-win for all famil participants," she added.

## Finnair issues could derail Qantas deal

**FINNAIR** has threatened to walk away from a wet lease agreement with Qantas amid an escalating dispute between the Nordic carrier and its pilots.

The two airlines have had the deal in place since 2023 (*TD* 19 May 2023), with Qantas currently leasing two A330s from Finnair to operate long-haul flights from Sydney during the ongoing period of curtailed aircraft capacity.

At the time, the agreement was a key plank in Qantas' plan to accelerate its return to pre-pandemic capacity by Mar 2024.

However, industrial action from Finnair's pilots over stand-by shifts and salary packages has led to a ban on stand-by shifts, which is now impacting the carrier's ability to provide the crew needed for Qantas-operated flights between Sydney and Bangkok/Singapore.

"Finnair has initiated discussions with [Qantas] on future options



for the cooperation agreement, with one option being termination of the agreement," the airline stated.

So far, there has been no impact to any Qantas flights as a result of the Finnair pilots' industrial action, with the Flying Kangaroo adamant it will be able to fulfil all services, regardless of the outcome of Finnair's ongoing dispute with the pilots union.

"We're in regular discussions with Finnair and have mitigations plans in place if we're advised of impacts to our services," a spokesperson for Qantas said.

"The wet lease with Finnair begins converting to a dry lease

this year, with flights to be operated by Qantas pilots and crew from Oct 2025."

In addition to the possible scuttling of the Qantas wet lease agreement, Finnair is playing hard ball with pilots in other areas as well, tabling the potential sacking or furloughing of 90 of its 1,000 pilots if industrial action were to continue for much longer.

"It is sad that the pilot union's prolonged industrial action has led to a situation where we have to start change negotiations," Finnair's Chief People Officer Kaisa Aalto-Luoto said.

"In our 101 years of history, we have never needed to reduce pilot positions due to operational reasons, even when the Russian airspace closed and fundamentally changed our operating environment, we succeeded in securing employment for our pilots with collaboration arrangements." *AB*

## SCENIC ECLIPSE

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## Hyatt acquires Playa

**ALL-INCLUSIVE** Latin American hotel brand Playa Hotels and Resorts will join the Hyatt Hotels Corporation brand portfolio in a US\$2.6 billion full acquisition. Hyatt previously owned 9.4% of Playa Hotels and as part of the acquisition, will assume control of around US\$900 million in debt. The Playa network consists of eight properties in Mexico, the Dominican Republic and Jamaica, with each to be rebranded under Hyatt Ziva and Hyatt Zilara labels. Under its asset-light operating model, Hyatt will source third-party buyers for Playa's currently wholly-owned property network. "This pending transaction allows us to broaden our portfolio while providing more value to all of our stakeholders through an expanded management platform for all-inclusive resorts," said Hyatt Chief Executive Officer, Mark Hoplamazian. The acquisition is expected to close later this year.

## Link Travel Group Live

**AROUND** 180 people will be in attendance at a Link Travel Group conference later this year, comprised of its growing member base and key partners. Taking place at the W Brisbane from 20-23 Nov, Link Live will see owners of Link agencies attend a private dinner, before joining a VIP lunch the next day, a forum for Link's partners to have exclusive access to member owners prior to the start of the main conference on Sat. Attendees at the main conference day on 22 Nov will have access to a full day of learning and activities, as well as a wealth of collaboration and training opportunities. Delegates will also be able to observe several plenary sessions and panels, in addition to a range of targeted breakout sessions. The milestone gathering will culminate in a special celebration dinner to be held off-site on the



Sat night, "at a very exciting and very Brisbane venue", which is yet to be revealed. Sun morning will see everyone come together for a partners exchange, where invited partners will have the stage to showcase their offerings and unique selling points to all Link members. "We were close to holding Link Live in 2023 but felt the time just wasn't right," Link Travel Group General Manager Scott Darlow (pictured) explained. "Now with a relatively even mix of corporate and luxury/leisure members, the time is now right to hold this unique event and excitement amongst our owners and also our partners is high."

## Aussies loving Fiji

**AUSTRALIANS'** love of Fiji continues, spending \$2.5 billion between 2023 and 2024, according to new data from the Westpac Wave quarterly report. "Fiji has long been heavily reliant on Australia providing tourists and over the years has continued to build on that relationship," stated the report. In fact, Aussies make up almost half (45%) of the South Pacific island's total visitor arrivals. And in 2024, 5% more Australians travelled to Fiji, with increases continuing to be expected this year. In 2023, over 10 million Aussies went overseas for holidays and business, of which 4.2% went to Fiji. The island nation ranked 11th on the list of most travelled destinations by Aussies. Meanwhile, Indonesia received the most in terms of Australian tourist expenditure (\$9.8 billion) followed by NZ (\$8.2 billion).

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## Ski early at Club Med

**ALL-INCLUSIVE** resort brand Club Med is offering savings of up to 20% on stays at its European ski resorts, with a second round of its 2026 earlybird deals open.

Valid for bookings from 11-14 Feb, savings of more than \$3,000 per adult can be enjoyed at France's Club Med Val d'Isere, the only Club Med Exclusive Collection resort in the Alps.

Deals are also available at Club Med Val Thorens, Club Med Tignes and Club Med Arcs Panorama, all also in France, based on a seven-night stay.

Deals are valid for stays from 28 Nov 2025 to 03 May 2026, with more information available on the Club Med Agents Portal [HERE](#).



## Aussies sling to Singapore

**VISITOR** numbers from Australia and New Zealand to Singapore surpassed pandemic levels in 2024, with the region recording one of the strongest growth rates for the Lion City.

According to official figures for the full year, Australia ranked fifth for arrivals, with 1.17 million visitors passing through the gates, behind China, Indonesia, India and neighbour Malaysia, with overall arrivals climbing by 21% to 16.5 million.

Air connectivity was cited as a strong factor driving the positive numbers, with Changi Airport catering to a seat capacity of 41 million in 2024, a 15% increase on 2023 and 98% of 2019 levels.

Concerts by Taylor Swift, Ed Sheeran and Coldplay were praised for generating substantial economic benefits for the city.

Singapore also saw 1.8 million pax arrive from 340 cruise ship calls, including several maiden



visits from Royal Caribbean, Silversea and Viking Cruises ships.

Australia is expected to be among the city's top three in terms of spend once all tourism receipts are tallied, with Aussies parting with S\$1.44 billion (A\$1.7 billion) in the Jan-Sep period.

Spending figures for the same period among all source markets sub-totalled S\$22.4 billion (A\$26.3 billion).

"In 2024, Singapore's tourism sector posted a strong performance, an affirmation of the industry's efforts in refreshing our products and experiences, as well as embarking on new collaborations this past year," said Singapore Tourism Board Chief Executive, Melissa Ow. *ML*

## Excel in luxury tours

**THE** Council of Australian Tour Operators (CATO) is inviting travel agents to brush up on their expertise in the luxury touring market by completing one of its elective modules, which offers key insights into understanding and selling top-tier, exclusive travel experiences.

Participants will gain the skills and knowledge to meet and exceed the expectations of even the most discerning clients; match luxury tours to their clients' unique desires; and confidently deliver bespoke travel solutions that leave a lasting impression.

"Take your expertise to the next level and build a reputation as the go-to agent for unforgettable luxury experiences," CATO said.

Enrol in the CATO Touring Academy [HERE](#) to participate in the module.



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## Sabre puts AI in the spotlight at ITB

**SABRE** Corporation is preparing to showcase AI-driven retailing, multi-source content, and next-generation technology at ITB Berlin 2025 next month.

Several of the global travel tech company's executives, who are featured on the ITB speaker lineup, will provide attendees with insights into the evolving travel landscape and highlight the latest innovations from Sabre.

On the main stage, Sabre Hospitality President Scott Wilson (**pictured**) will explore the common myths versus the realities of transforming the travel industry's future in an interactive presentation.

Wilson will also examine the extent to which personalisation drives loyalty, the ways in which technology is changing the role of intermediaries, and which industry shifts are likely to have the most significant long-term effects.

Also speaking at the travel



trade fair, Sabre Hospitality's Vice President of Innovation, Amy Read, will join a panel discussion on the evolution of travel retailing.

Read will share Sabre's perspective on how travel companies can use technology to strengthen brand loyalty and unlock new revenue streams in an increasingly digital landscape.

Sabre Travel Solutions Head of

Global Solutions Engineering, Madhavan Kasthuri, will also participate in a panel discussion, focusing on the future of hyper-personalisation in travel and how AI can be integrated into travel planning and retailing.

Additionally, technology buyers visiting this year's event will be able to connect with Sabre at two trade fair booths, one dedicated to its travel distribution business, the other focused on hospitality IT.

At the Sabre Hospitality booth, attendees will get a first look at prototypes of the company's generative AI-powered tools, designed to enhance guest engagement, as well as a new payment solution that streamlines transactions for hospitality providers.

Meanwhile, the Sabre Travel Solutions will showcase advanced capabilities for selling and servicing multi-source content, including Sabre Red Lauchpad. *JM*

## Exit brings on change

**CARNIVAL** Corporation will restructure its senior ranks in the wake of the decision last week by long-time executive Jan Swartz to step down from her role.

The company will sunset the role of EVP Strategic Operations vacated by Swartz, deconsolidating the department and shifting its responsibilities to other divisions.

Locally, the change will see Carnival Australia Strategy and External Affairs Officer, Teresa Lloyd (**pictured**), report directly to Country Manager Peter Little, from Apr.

In the US, Chief of Staff Aubrie Brake will shift to the role of AVP Legal Operations, reporting to General Counsel Rick Miquez.



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## Albany upgrade plan

**LARGER** aircraft will be able to use Albany Airport after major upgrades are undertaken at the hub under a newly unveiled WA Government renovation plan.

If re-elected, the Labor Government led by Roger Cook will allocate \$11.5 million toward the project to support similar Federal Government pledges, with works to incorporate upgrades to runways & taxiways.

Funding would also be used to expand the terminal and car park.

“We’ve recognised the merits of this project for a long time, which is why our WA Labor Government was the first to commit funding,” WA Transport Minister Rita Saffioti said.

The Nationals have also pledged \$14 million in Albany Airport upgrades if elected on 08 Mar.

## Who will be the Sole Survivor?



**GLOBUS** family of brands’ (GFOB) All Star incentive is heating up, with a trio of winners of the three-month competition (**TD** 07 Jan) recently named.

The 12-week sales incentive features weekly prizes, as well as a grand finale, which will see the top two advisors from each state & territory win a trip to Sydney, where they will compete for the coveted title of ‘Sole Survivor’ - just as in the reality competition TV franchise of the same name.

The ultimate reward to be won on the night by competitors is an Avalon Waterways journey for two people.

Each week brings a new challenge, including tasks like registering for GFOB’s new portal, to securing bookings.

Travel advisors are encouraged to lock in as many bookings as possible to stay ahead and prepare for the next challenge, with other prizes along the way including personal holidays, travel credit, and more.

The winner of round three of the incentive was Flight Centre Elanora’s Amy Mudge, pictured with Business Development Manager Anji Tierney receiving her \$1,000 travel credit. *MS*

## VA weathers storm

**ADVERSE** weather in parts of North Queensland resulted in the cancellation of a handful of Virgin Australia services operating on 07 and 08 Feb.

One return Brisbane-Proserpine flight was cancelled by the carrier on 07 Feb due to the closure of Proserpine Airport, while another Sydney-Hamilton Island flight was forced to divert to Brisbane on 08 Feb due to a weather-related missed approach.

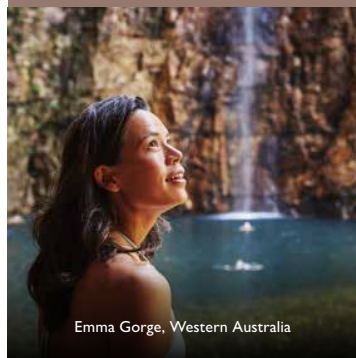
“We re-accommodated impacted guests on ad hoc services the next day,” the carrier confirmed to **Travel Daily**.

There were no impacts to schedules on 09 or 10 Feb.



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Emma Gorge, Western Australia

## Frankfurt walks it in

**FRANKFURT** Airport is now the first gateway in the world to use walkthrough scanners for passenger security checks.

The Rohde & Schwarz QPS Walk2000 air travel system offers greater comfort and convenience during security checks, as people need to simply walk through the scanner at normal speed, rather than stopping and starting.

In the future, the system will be used in additional security check lanes in Terminals 1 and 3.

“We’re the world’s first airport to set a new standard of passenger security with this 360° walkthrough scanner,” said Alexander Laukenmann, head of Fraport AG’s aviation division.

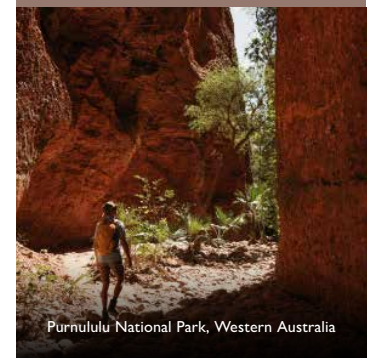
“This is part of our ongoing efforts to improve the passenger experience by using the latest technologies to make checkpoints faster and easier to navigate while upholding our high standard of security.”



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Purnululu National Park, Western Australia



## JNTO links up with advisors



**LINKD** Tourism, on behalf of the Japan National Tourism Organization (JNTO), recently wrapped up two jam-packed events for travel agents in Perth and Sydney (**TD** 12 Dec 2024).

The exhibition-style events were at capacity, attracting around 200 attendees total, and featuring a lineup of 40 prominent Japanese suppliers at each location.

Guests heard about Japan's new offerings while enjoying a full evening of networking, with a traditional koto player providing background music.

JNTO relayed to agents what factors are driving growth, a trajectory that saw a 48% increase in Australian travellers heading to Japan in 2024 compared to 2019.

Harriett Bougher, JNTO Business Development and Senior Assistant Marketing Manager, also thanked attendees for contributing to the tourist dispersal across regional areas of Japan, which saw huge growth in 2024 compared with previous years.

Special guest and Expo 2025 mascot Myaku-Myaku made an appearance at the events as well, creating awareness for World Expo 2025, which will take place in Osaka from 13 Apr to 13 Oct.

Both events featured prize giveaways, including accommodation, traditional crafts, and Japanese spirits. *JM*

The JNTO roadshow team is **pictured** at the Sydney event:

Naoki Tokutsu, JNTO; Nobuyuki Mori, JNTO; Naoki Kitazawa, JNTO; Myaku-Myaku, World Expo 2025 Mascot; Harriett Bougher, JNTO; Millie Browne, Linkd Tourism; Yuta Shimada, JNTO; Sally Miles, Linkd Tourism; and Lawson Dibb, Linkd Tourism. *JM*

## Ladies who Laos

**WALKING** tour company Camino Women and Khiri Travel have launched a four-day trek as part of a 12-day Laos journey.

Based on the principles of responsible tourism, the trip will take female hikers on a mountain community trail and aims to support and include communities from three nearby hamlets.

According to Camino Walks, the ambition is for community tourism to enhance the quality of life for the villagers.

To support this, four community tourism experts from the Laos Government recently trained local men and women about sustainable tourism, safety standards, food preparation and customer service.

"Our approach is to treat tourism as a supplementary source of income for the villagers who are rice farmers," said Julie Beaufrere, Country Manager for Khiri Travel Laos.

"We don't want over-dependency on tourism, and the cultural learning process is also very much both ways between villagers and the women hikers."

## ATIA UPDATE

from Richard Taylor, Director of Membership & Industry Affairs



**ANYBODY** who has witnessed an ATIA presentation in the last couple of years will be familiar with our message that arguably the most important element in modernising the association was to increase the avenues of listening to our members

Creating more methods of collating thoughts and opinions, from as many sources as possible, will in turn result in wider industry understanding, more effective advocacy and a great deal more.

It is a pleasure to invite you to step forward and take part in our 2025 ATIA Pulse Series – small, informal, online meetings that will commence next week to "take the pulse" of various segments of the industry.

They'll be split into initial categories that will include independent agencies large and small, tour operators, wholesalers and, critically, the rapidly growing segment of mobile and home-based advisors.

Members will be receiving more information today by e-mail, but with everyone's inboxes more packed than Santorini at sunset these days, I'm not taking any chances – if you're reading this, get involved. **CLICK HERE** for more information and to register

your interest.

The first meeting is on Tue, and there is no time to lose.

Moving on, and we've been quite flabbergasted by the feedback and enthusiasm around our 'Renewal Rockstar' campaign launched last week.

So many of our partners stepped forward to offer some genuinely amazing prizes for the good people that finalise the renewal of their ATIA accreditation by the deadline, and on behalf of our team we've all been so excited to add excitement to the process - good luck.

This week we'll be attending Entire Travel Group's 'Showcase and Soiree' nights in Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane.

They'll welcome more than 900 agents and advisors who'll engage with 50+ suppliers and tourism organisations.

We'll have team members at each of the events, and in Sydney we'll have our very own booth.

We'll be very upset if you don't say hello.

Finally, both *Travel Daily* and my LinkedIn feed have both come alive recently with reports of people being promoted.

While there's a very legitimate industry focus on creating pathways for new people to join us in travel, let's not forget that real stories of career progression will be what keeps people hanging around.

Well done to all involved.

## DOH steps into the future

**HAMAD** International Airport in Doha opened Concourse E last week, an area of the hub that focuses on faster boarding, greater accessibility and more retail and dining options.

Self-boarding gates that scan boarding passes automatically offer a smoothing travel experience are in operation, while hearing loops, ramps, elevators and spacious seating are also accessible for travellers with disabilities.

The terminal also features energy-efficient systems, water management solutions and optimised thermal comfort.

"With the launch of Concourse



E, travellers can experience the first phase of a transformative expansion aimed at elevating every aspect of their journey," said COO Hamad Ali Al-Khater.

"This marks only the beginning, with further developments planned to enhance connectivity, capacity, and the overall experience at Hamad International Airport".

Concourse D developments will be announced shortly. *JHM*



### TUI's green ships

**GERMAN** cruise line TUI Cruises has taken delivery of the first of two liquefied natural gas (LNG) dual-fuel cruise ships being constructed by Italian shipbuilder Fincantieri.

The newbuild, *Mein Schiff Relax*, is designed to be future-proofed, thanks to the possibility for it to use low-emission fuels such as bio- or e-LNG.

The vessel has been outfitted with a shore power connection system, catalytic converters that are compliant with Euro 6 standards, a waste heat recovery turbine that harnesses residual warmth from diesel generators, as well as a waste treatment system that can convert organic substances into recyclable components through a thermal process.

Combined, these green features mean the TUI ship will emit zero emissions while docked, which will account for around 40% of its operational time.

A naming ceremony for *Mein Schiff Relax*, which has a capacity for just under 4,000 passengers, will be held on 09 Apr 2025 in Malaga, Spain.

Meanwhile, her sister ship, dubbed *Mein Schiff Flow*, is scheduled to begin sailing in mid-2026.

## SMART TECH TO LOWER EMISSIONS

**ARTIFICIAL** intelligence will be harnessed by Vietnamese low-cost carrier Vietjet to provide solutions in flight fuel efficiency and operational optimisation, the carrier has announced.

A partnership between Vietjet and OpenAirlines will see the airline become the first in Vietnam to adopt SkyBreathe, a platform that uses big data and machine learning to analyse flight data and optimise fuel usage.

Once operational, Vietjet said it hopes to lower fuel consumption by 2% and cut 96,000 tonnes of CO2 from its annual footprint.

SkyBreathe works by collating numerous flight data sources into one algorithm and has analysed over 21 million flight fuel reports.

At the same time, Vietjet will roll out the SkyBreathe My Fuel Coach app to its pilot workforce to act as a fuel assistant and to provide personalised eco-briefing



advice for each pilot.

This will allow each to monitor their performance, identify areas for improvement and implement new fuel efficiency best practice.

Vietjet Vice President Nguyen Duc Thinh said the agreement with OpenAirlines represents a key milestone in the airline's sustainable development strategy.

"By leveraging advanced technologies, we can continuously innovate, optimise

operations, reduce fuel consumption and CO2 emissions, and enhance passengers' flight experiences at reasonable costs," Duc Thinh said.

"This collaboration also highlights Vietjet's relentless effort towards sustainability while delivering long-term benefits to the global aviation industry." ML

Duc Thinh is **pictured** formalising the agreement with OpenAirlines Chief Executive, Alexandre Feray.

### World eco certification platform launches

**THE** world's leading travel and tourism certification organisations have teamed up to launch the Tourism Sustainability Certifications Alliance (TSCA).

The registered association will act as a collaborative certification platform for the tourism industry, helping travellers make informed choices based on reliable sustainability standards.

The TSCA has established a minimum sustainable tourism standard, providing a unified system to meet growing demand for independent certification.

The next steps for the TSCA will be to assist tourism businesses in meeting the requirements of new consumer protection legislation, such as the upcoming EU Green Claims Directive, which aims to clamp down on greenwashing.

### WTTTC Roadmaps

**THE** World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTTC) has published the second edition of its Net Zero Roadmap to help the sector achieve net zero by 2050.

The updated version offers insights into the current state of climate action for the travel industry as of 2024, and looks at key challenges and providing a tangible action plan.

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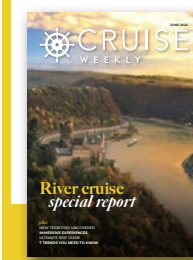
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### MONEY

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

**AU\$1 = US\$0.628**

**DESPITE** a sluggish start to the week, the Australian dollar has bounced back this morning, rising from 0.6235 yesterday to near 0.6290.

The latest Consumer Price Index (CPI) shows Australia's inflation rate has softened, falling from 2.8% to 2.5%, prompting expectations of a 25 basis point rate cut by the RBA later this month.

*Wholesale rates this morning*

US	\$0.628
UK	£0.508
NZ	\$1.113
Euro	€0.609
Japan	¥95.48
Thailand	฿21.29
China	¥4.589
South Africa	11.58
Canada	\$0.899
Crude oil	US\$71.10

### Award for VA crew

**VIRGIN** Australia has been named as the World's Best Cabin Crew for the seventh successive year in the 2025 Airline Excellence Awards.

The annual AirlineRatings.com ranking considered more than 380 carriers in its list, judging on criteria including safety, value, guest comfort and innovation.

Virgin Australia Regional Airlines was also singled out as the World's Best Regional Airline, claiming the gong for the second year in a row.

## Sealink as cold as ice



Image credit: City of Fremantle.

**SEALINK** Western Australia is sponsoring the inaugural International Ice Bath Day and again supporting a Guinness World Record attempt for the largest group ice bath.

The touring company is partnering with One Life Live It, which champions mental health and wellness through cold exposure therapy.

Taking place on 01 Mar, 1,000 participants will head to Leighton Beach in North Fremantle to encourage as many people as possible to take part in a three-minute ice-bath immersion in a 20-minute period.

This year's event builds on the success of last year's attempt.

"As a company that connects people to incredible destinations, we also recognise the importance of connection to overall well-being," said Leycester Cory, General Manager of SeaLink Western Australia.

"International Ice Bath Day is a fantastic initiative that not

only brings people together but also highlights the benefits of resilience, mental strength, and community support.

"We're proud to be part of an event that champions both mental health awareness and the strength of the WA spirit." *JHM*

### Trump resort halted

**INDONESIAN** environmental authorities have ordered work to cease at an integrated tourism development near Jakarta which includes a Trump branded hotel.

The MNC Lido Lake development features a number of hotels, a golf course and a theme park.

Following an inspection which unearthed numerous violations, Indonesian Environment Minister Hanif Faisal Nurofiq issued a stop work order and plans to issue developers with sanctions.

Chief among the transgressions was sedimentation in Lido Lake which had caused it to shrink in size by about half.



### Window Seat

**IF YOU** thought Sydney was expensive, consider sparing a thought (and maybe a penny) for Londoners.

A couple living in Essex in the UK decided it would be better for their bank account to fly to another country for a one-day holiday rather than spend a day out in London.

At around 8am on Mon 03 Feb, Siobhan Walters, 56, and her husband, 64, caught a Ryanair flight from London Stansted Airport to Pisa, Italy, where they spent 12 hours sightseeing before flying back home around 10pm that night.

Including the return flights, the couple spent a total of around £140 (A\$275) - and believe they would have spent more than double that (£300/A\$590) had they decided to head into London.

"We used to live in Camden but moved because it was so expensive and we rarely go into London because of that," Walters said.

"One drink costs £14 (A\$27)," she pointed out.

"The last time we went into the capital for dinner, a burger and chips cost £25 (A\$50)."

While in Pisa, the money-savvy couple soaked in the sun, visited the city's famed tower and cathedral, wandered through beautiful alleyways, and enjoyed authentic food.

The couple loved their day trip so much they've already booked more, with Rome and Barcelona next on the list.





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