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2026: Jan 2, 9, 16, 23, 30; Feb 6, 13, 20, 27; Dec 11, 18, 25

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Celestyal Discovery
 Itinerary
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Travel Daily ON LOCATION

MELBOURNE

Today's issue of *TD* is coming to you courtesy of Journey Beyond, which is hosting us for its 2025 season launch.

JOURNEY Beyond is providing a preview of what travellers can expect from its stable of iconic brands, and we are at the Queensbridge Square in Southbank to get the scoop.

The company famous for The Ghan, Indian Pacific, Outback Spirit and many others has pledged a day of insights and exciting announcements.

So stay tuned to *Travel Daily* this week for the full story.

ATIA fighting for card fees

THE Australian Travel Industry Association (ATIA) is urging the Reserve Bank to continue to allow travel agents to recover the true cost of facilitating card payments through fees and surcharges.

Amid a current review by the RBA into Merchant Card Payment Costs and Surcharging, a submission by ATIA outlines the unique risks and challenges borne by agents relating to transparency and competitive pressure.

The RBA review paper is seeking feedback relating to proposals to broadly ban or cap surcharging and to tighten the definition relating to 'cost of acceptance'.

In its submission, ATIA highlights that 92% of its 1,750 members are small businesses and that it

needs a unique solution to suit its unique circumstances, with no narrowing of RBA definitions and the authority to continue to surcharge appropriately.

ATIA outlines that the travel industry is uniquely placed with a "rolling" no fault third party chargeback exposure of around \$5.4 billion for up to 120 days post-payment due to heightened "forward delivery risk".

This risk is exacerbated by some payment terminal providers requiring businesses to lodge a bond of up to \$1 million.

ATIA's submission follows efforts by specialist industry payment firms including Mint Payments and TravelPay to cushion agents from exorbitant bonds through dedicated payment systems (*TD* 24 Jun 2024) and new chargeback schemes (*TD* 17 Dec 2024). *ML*

TK eyes Auckland

TURKISH Airlines has outlined plans to launch flights to Auckland via Singapore as part of ongoing expansion plans in Asia Pacific.

According to Turkish media outlet, *Turizm Ekonomi*, TK Chair Ahmet Bolat announced his goal of adding Auckland to the airline's route map, but did not provide a timeline for services to begin.

The airline is also planning on launching flights from Istanbul to the US city of Minneapolis, potentially as soon as May 2025.

Last year, TK began flights to Melbourne (*TD* 06 Mar 2024) via Singapore and Sydney via Kuala Lumpur (*TD* 02 Dec 2024).

Celestyal savings

CELESTYAL is offering savings of up to 50% on select sailings, such as the seven-night 'Heavenly Greece, Italy & Croatia' itinerary - see the **cover page** for details.

Today's issue of *TD*

Travel Daily today features five pages of news including our **Luxury page**, a cover wrap from **Celestyal Cruises**, plus full pages from:

- **Infinity Holidays**
- **A Force for Good**

Travel Daily ON LOCATION

LONDON

Today's issue of *TD* is coming to you courtesy of VisitBritain, which is hosting key Aussie buyers at its annual flagship event, **Showcase Britain**.

LONDON'S public transport is almost emblematic of the city itself, and VisitBritain's Aussie buyers began today with a city tour in a fleet of black cabs.

After a spot of lunch, the group descended into a disused underground station at Charing Cross to learn how these spaces are being repurposed as ideal venues for film, TV and events.

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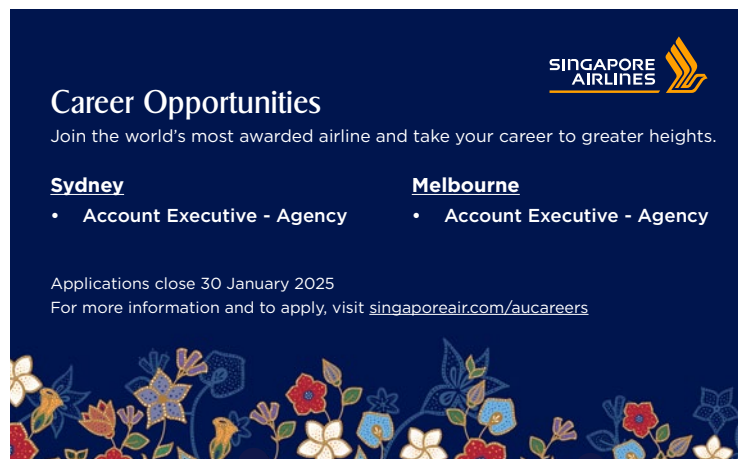
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Britain opens to the world

MORE than 120 travel trade buyers from 17 global markets have embarked on a series of educational visits throughout the United Kingdom this week as part of VisitBritain's major annual 'Showcase Britain' trade event.

In line with the imminent launch of its global 'Starring Great Britain' campaign, visiting buyers will cross the country exploring famous backdrops from a variety of trending and iconic movies and TV shows past and present.

Buyers from Australia and New Zealand include Flight Centre; Helloworld; Infinity Holidays; Qantas Holidays; Abercrombie & Kent; Travel Associates; Bunnik Tours; and House of Travel.

UK Tourism Minister Chris Bryant said so many unforgettable moments from cinema and television were filmed in all corners of the country.

"We want more visitors from home and abroad to immerse themselves in British destinations made famous, thanks to film and TV, and events like this will help drive growth in our £74 billion tourism industry," Bryant said.

MEANWHILE, VisitBritain has rolled out a range of suggested itineraries and resources for travel agents to capitalise on the upcoming campaign.

Itineraries feature genre-led experiences and bookable product - **CLICK HERE** to access the main campaign page.

Campaign research shows film and TV locations are powerful tools for travel inspiration, with 86% of Australians polled by VisitBritain admitting they are keen to visit a film or television site during a trip to the UK. *ML*

Ski into TNZ webinar

TRAVEL sellers can learn about New Zealand South Island's winter and ski offering in Tourism New Zealand's upcoming webinar.

Held in partnership with Sno'n'Ski, Realnz, and NZSki, the session will take place on 04 Feb at 12pm AEDT.

Agents who register and attend the full webinar will have a chance to win a Queenstown winter prize package for two, valued at over A\$3,100 - **CLICK HERE** to register.

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Travelrite gets to the Gatsby



Air NZ adds execs

AIR New Zealand has made two new appointments to its executive team, with Nathan McGraw joining as Chief Safety and Risk Officer, and Scott Wilkinson as Chief Commercial Officer.

McGraw, who takes up his new role on 31 Mar, has worked in aviation for more than 30 years, including the last two decades at Air New Zealand, most recently as General Manager of Integrated Planning.

Meanwhile, Wilkinson will join the Air NZ team in the latter half of this year, coming from Qantas, where he was most recently the Executive Manager, Digital and Direct Customer Experience.

THE Travelrite International team from Balwyn, Victoria recently returned from their annual staff getaway.

Over the weekend, the group sailed on a three-night cruise from Melbourne to Bass Strait on P&O Australia's *Pacific Explorer*.

The voyage included a Great Gatsby-themed night, which saw the team dress up in their finest 1920s garb (**pictured**). *JM*



MEET THE SPEAKERS



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Tours

SESSION

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The story of Wendy Wu

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CATO IWD speaker

OLYMPIC gold medal canoe slalom star Noemie Fox will headline the Council of Australian Tour Operators' (CATO) 2025 International Women's Day lunch in Melbourne.

Fox will help lead a tribute to a litany of achievements by women both in the travel industry and in the wider community and speak of her Paris Olympics success.

Tickets to the 06 Mar luncheon, themed as a celebration of 'Emotional Resilience', are still available and can be purchased - **CLICK HERE** for more details.

Infinite South Island

INFINITY Holidays is highlighting its New Zealand South Island packages, featuring rich cultural experiences and stunning scenery - see **page six** to find out more.

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Travel Daily ON LOCATION

FOZ DO IGUAZU

Today's issue of *TD* is coming to you courtesy of Intrepid, which is this week hosting us on its Iguazu Falls Short Break.

ON THE final day of our Intrepid 'Short Break', we will today be exploring the Brazilian side of Iguazu Falls. This side offers panoramic views of the 3km long waterfall network, showcasing the immense scale and beauty of this natural phenomenon. After a tour of the Brazilian side of Iguazu Falls with our local guide, some guests will embark on their added optional experiences - including a scenic helicopter ride or a visit to the bird park - while others will continue to explore the falls at their leisure.

Qld's 20-year plan in talks

THE Queensland Government welcomed more than 70 industry and community stakeholders in Longreach recently to help shape a new 20-year tourism plan.

The event offered an opportunity for Queenslanders to have their say on 'Destination 2045: Queensland's Tourism Future', a road map for the state's tourism industry from now until 2045.

The strategy aims to grow the state's visitation, enhance its global appeal, attract investment, support jobs, and accelerate infrastructure and experiences.

The discussion paper is the first step in an extensive stakeholder engagement process, including industry insights, regional roadshows, and dedicated forums on key focus areas.

Speaking at the Longreach session, Minister for the Environment and Tourism and Minister for Science and Innovation Andrew Powell




(pictured) said now was the time to maximise the state's offering ahead of the 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

"The Queensland Government is determined to make our great state the number one destination in Australia again.

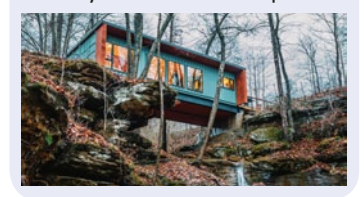
"To do that, we need to plan ahead to ensure we have the experiences, accommodation and people ready for our visitors - from Australia's grey nomads to international bucket-list adventurers," Powell added.

Consultation closes on 28 Feb - to complete the online survey or find the location of a regional roadshow, **CLICK HERE**. JM



Window Seat

WHEN it comes to picking an Airbnb, the more unique, the better - at least, that's if TikTok is anything to go by. According to views, likes, comments and shares on TikTok between Jan and Nov last year, a modern treehouse located on a Scottish Highland cattle farm in Canada is one of the top 10 most loved short-stay properties. A shipping container cabin directly over a waterfall (pictured) in Ohio, US also made the list, as did a massive estate in Texas complete with its very own mini water park.




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*Fares and itineraries are accurate as of 13 January 2025 and are subject to change or withdrawal. New Year Sale offer expires 1 February 2025, applies to select categories on select voyages, subject to availability and is capacity controlled. The quoted fares are valid for sale until 1 February, unless sold out prior and include any/all savings/upgrades. Airfares are additional. Cruise fares are per person, twin share (except fares for Solo category, which are for single travellers), in AUD and include all taxes, port fees and onboard gratuities. [^]50% Reduced Deposits applies for new bookings only and if departure is outside of final payment; valid until 1 February 2025; this offer is not valid on Around the World Cruises and segments. For full terms & conditions that apply, please visit OceaniaCruises.com/terms. All rights reserved. Oceania Cruises is not responsible for typographical errors or omissions. Ships' Registry: Marshall Islands. NCL Australia Pty Ltd ABN 8060 7578 781.

EUROPEAN WATERWAYS' NEW PRINCESS

EUROPEAN Waterways has acquired *Shannon Princess*, Ireland's only luxury hotel barge.

"We are thrilled to welcome *Shannon Princess* to the European Waterways family," says Derek Banks, Managing Director of European Waterways.

"Her charm and character align perfectly with our commitment to luxury and cultural immersion.

"This acquisition further enhances our ability to offer our guests unforgettable journeys through Ireland's stunning landscapes and historic waterways," Banks added.

European Waterways specialises in offering luxury hotel barging and currently has a fleet of 18 vessels on offer.

Shannon Princess has been cruising Southern Ireland's River Shannon since 2003, offering guests the opportunity to



admire rolling green landscapes and charming villages, while experiencing private whiskey tastings and guided tours of ancient castles.

Given increased demand, *Shannon Princess* is now planning to extend the season for 2025 and beyond.

Accommodating up to 10 passengers and a dedicated crew of five, she features en suite cabins, a panoramic saloon and a

sun deck with a spa pool.

Now that she is part of the European Waterways portfolio, *Shannon Princess* will take on the company's traditional blue, yellow and red livery ahead of the 2025 cruise schedule.

The vessel may also undergo several enhancements in the future, the line revealed, including expanded excursion options, bespoke onboard experiences and refined interiors. *JHM*

Ponant lux collection

PONANT has released a new 'Luxury Voyages Collection' brochure, featuring exclusive offers and experiences from Sep 2025 to Apr 2026.

The new collection offers once-in-a-lifetime experiences, including an exclusive Antarctic adventure departing from Ushuaia to Hobart on board *Le Commandant Charcot*.

The voyage will be joined by Jonathan Shackleton, a descendant of Antarctic explorer Ernest Shackleton, and the family's historian.

Guests will also have the opportunity to venture into the heart of the Weddell Sea.

Other highlights will include hidden gems across destinations such as Northern Europe, the Canary Islands, and PNG.

Ponant is also offering more than 50 departures featuring a free solo supplement, eliminating the tariff for single travellers.

This offer is valid on select departures across the globe, including voyages to Northern Europe, Scandinavia, Antarctica, the Mediterranean, and more.

Ponant last week announced its acquisition of a majority share of Peru-based Aqua Expeditions (*TD* 17 Jan).

Radisson Collection delivers luxury in Sri Lanka

RADISSON Collection has made its debut in the South East Asia and Pacific Region, with the opening of a luxurious new beachfront resort in Sri Lanka's historic city of Galle.

Marking Radisson Hotel Group's fourth hotel in Sri Lanka, the resort is set directly on the beach near Unawatuna, and features 70 guest rooms and 36 suites.

Radisson Collection Resort, Galle also boasts a 1,200m²



Grand Penthouse with five bedrooms, a spiral staircase, and an infinity pool.

Guests can enjoy an interactive seafood dining experience, an indoor bar with live DJ music, a dedicated play zone for kids, and much more.

Virtuoso's Dream

VIRTUOSO is offering its team members around the world a paid day of service in support of the Realise the Dream initiative, inspired by Martin Luther King Jr.

The luxury travel network's team members can self-select which day they will participate in the service, with the flexibility to choose charitable organisations and initiatives that personally resonate with them.



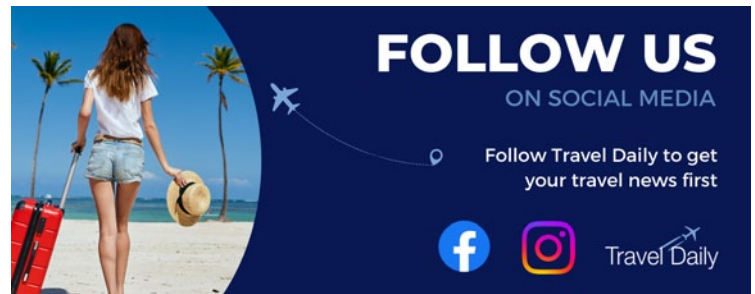
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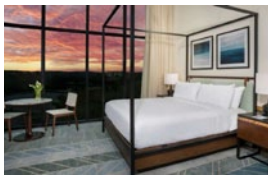
Nestled in the rugged landscapes of Gowrie Park in North West Tasmania, the recently opened **Wilder Tasmania** offers an eco-luxury escape that aims to "redefine comfort in the wild". Located close to Cradle Mountain and Mount Roland, the

property features handcrafted geodesic domes with stargazing windows, wood heaters, and ensuite bathrooms. Guests can convene at the Wilder Lodge, a communal hub with wood fires and a bar.



Four Seasons Hotel Singapore has announced the opening of Chi Longevity, a new wellness clinic dedicated to slowing the biological ageing process. With a team of doctors, dietitians, psychologists and health coaches, the 112m² clinic will offer tailored

health assessments, incorporating advanced diagnostic tools such as blood tests, cognitive testing and genetic profiling from the hotel, and specialised programs, from gut health optimisation, to sleep and stress.



Admiral Fell Inn, located in Baltimore, Maryland in the US, is undergoing a multi-million dollar transformation. The historic waterfront hotel will reopen in Apr as **The William Fell, Tapestry Collection by Hilton**, and will boast a modernised interior

design, local nautical-themed art, a coffee area on the first floor, a fitness centre with a courtyard, a fifth-floor meeting space, and boardroom surrounded by a wraparound terrace.



Mercure Garut City Center has opened in the Indonesian town of Garut, offering easy access to key business districts, government offices, and a shopping centre. The hotel features 160 rooms and suites, as well as a swimming pool, a fully equipped

gym, and a restaurant serving local and international flavours. There are also four meeting rooms and two ballrooms.



Banyan Tree Krabi, a luxury beachfront resort in southern Thailand, has introduced a special afternoon tea experience, available to both guests and passing visitors. Perched among the trees high overlooking the Andaman Sea, groups of up to four can sit

at one of the three 'bird's nest' tables to enjoy a selection of teas served in refined porcelain, complemented by gourmet finger foods.

HTG Expo breaks records



THE Hunter Travel Group (HTG) kicked off the 2025 holiday expo season with a record-breaking event on Sun 19 Jan, which saw over 7,500 travellers gather in Newcastle, NSW.

Visitors took advantage of exclusive deals and booking bonuses, and had the opportunity to connect with more than 70 HTG team members and over 95 supplier representatives.

Around 30 inspiring travel talks were hosted across four large theatres, attracting more than 2,500 attendees.

Among the most sought-after destinations were Europe, Japan, Canada, Alaska, the Americas, Antarctica, India, Africa, and ocean and river cruising.

The brand's travel advisors processed a reservation every 60 seconds of the five-hour event, with bookings up nearly 40% compared to last year.

HTG CEO Brett Dann said: "Our expo offers a strong indication of the year ahead, showcasing the destinations that are capturing travellers' imaginations, including both newly popular and re-

emerging favourites."

Now in its 45th year in the mid-Jan time slot, the HTG expo reaffirmed that travel is still top-of-mind for Aussies heading into 2025 and 2026. *JM*

Disney Paris revamp

DISNEYLAND Paris will undergo a \$3.3 billion expansion, including the renaming and doubling in size of Walt Disney Studios Park.

The development plans also include the revamp of the luxury Disneyland Hotel, and the arrival of two immersive new themed areas - 'The World of Frozen' and 'The Lion King land'.

Guests will also be able to enjoy a new nighttime show, 'Disney Tales of Magic', a 20-minute spectacle blending drones, synchronised fountains, high-definition projections and ultra-bright lasers, set to the sound of a 100-piece orchestra.

The ambitious transformation, which begins rolling out this year, aims to cater to growing visitor demand and aid the park's post-pandemic recovery.

New Zealand's South Island Getaway

Discover curated South Island packages featuring rich cultural experiences and the world's most stunning natural scenery. Kia ora!

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*Price per person based on twin share. Subject to availability, alternative product maybe offered. *From' prices can change without notice and offer can be removed at any time and without notice. Prices correct at time of sending, please contact our reservation team for up to date pricing and availability. Rates are commissionable and are available by calling or emailing Infinity Holidays sales reservation team.

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