

Travel Daily

First with the news

Thursday 3rd July 2025



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Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today features eight pages of news including our **Business Events News** page plus full pages from:

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WIN a pair of Apple AirPods with Consolidated Travel, for those booking travel through to the end of the year - see **page 10**.

Clarke joins LTC

A **NEW** face has joined The Luxury Travel Collection (LTC) team, with Adrian Clarke making his return to the Australian luxury travel sector.

Clarke has joined LTC in a newly created role as Sales & Operations Leader, following a few years away from the industry. This will be his second go-around with Flight Centre Travel Group, where he spent 10 years prior to the pandemic, including as Travel Associates' National Marketing Manager.

Clarke has also previously served as Virtuoso's Head of Marketing & Commercial.

He will be based in Brisbane, reporting directly to General Manager Nikki Glading.

Europe surges to \$280m

AUSTRALIAN travel to Europe in the next few months is expected to jump by 10% on last year, hotel and airline booking figures from ANZ have showed.

While the early data indicates that spend is unlikely to hit the \$313 million peak experienced during the 'revenge travel' period of 2023, it is a welcome rise on 2024, which saw a 19% YoY fall.

ANZ customers spent 31 days on average in Europe in the summer of 2024, recording an average spend of \$2,480.

Jul remains the most popular month for travel to Europe, the bank found, with May the peak month for planning.

Last year also saw Gen X take top spot for European summer spending, forking out \$88.35 million on leisure trips.

Of all the states, Victorian residents are the most likely to spend the most on bookings, last year averaging \$2,629 on



European adventures, while the ANZ report also showed credit cards were favoured over debit cards, accounting for two-thirds of total spend.

Despite its recent visitation troubles (**TD** 24 Apr), Great Britain led the list of destinations last year, recording a spend of \$67 million.

While the UK has surged ahead, some markets have dropped away, with the Netherlands last year only taking in half of 2023 expenditure, while France, despite the traction generated by the Summer Olympics, fell away significantly by 20%.

Meanwhile, non-European destinations saw a 3% increase in spend in 2024, with Japan climbing 32% year-on-year. **AB**



DISCOVER
HONG KONG

Save with Wendy

WENDY Wu Tours has launched its 2025 getaway sale, with savings of up to \$1,000pp.

The promotion, which runs from 01 Jul to 29 Aug, is available on a wide range of tours and departures remaining this year - call 1300 727 998 for more.



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Sydney falling short

THERE is a significant gap between the perception that visitors have of Sydney versus its real competitive performance, according to a new study from the Committee for Sydney.

The Benchmarking Sydney's Brand 2025 report, which examined how the Harbour City's identity compares to other global cities, found that while Sydney is perceived positively among visitors, in reality it falls short of

expectations.

The committee attributed the imbalance to the "magnetism that is derived from Sydney's iconic imagery, lifestyle appeal, and widespread visibility".

The report pointed out that infrastructure gaps, logistical inefficiencies, high costs and delivery challenges all add up to reality sometimes failing to meet high visitor expectations.

A significant driver of Sydney's visitor appeal is its beaches - a category in which it is considered a top five destination, but is outside the top 15 when it comes to music and nightlife, and in the middle of the pack for sustainability.

"Such gaps appear to reflect not only an overshadowing tourism identity, but also some ingrained assumptions about what Sydney is and isn't for, as well as the specific challenges changing global minds and stereotypes for a city further away from most external observers," the Commission stated. *JM*

Europe swelters

THE top level of the Eiffel Tower was closed to tourists yesterday as France and several other European countries baked through a major heatwave.

Temperatures of just over 40°C have seared tourist hotspots across Greece, Spain, Portugal, Italy, and many others.

Travellers in Europe are being warned to stay hydrated and out of the sun during the middle of the day as much as possible.

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AVIATION WEEK

AI action falls short

AUSTRALIAN Travel Careers Council CEO Rick Myatt recently raised concerns about a lack of guard rails around AI use in travel with NSW Opposition Leader Mark Speakman (**pictured**).

While the VIP briefing suggested appointing a specialist AI minister in NSW, Myatt stressed the need to tackle the issue sooner, especially around the lack of funding for specific AI workforce travel training initiatives.

"AI governance is very loose," Myatt said, adding that without a legislative arrangement, the use of AI could be limited to back-office and internal productivity, as it cannot adequately address the need to ensure that consumer safety protections are met.



CATO says oui

ATOUT France has joined the Council of Australian Tour Operators' (CATO) Touring Academy, with its first module covering sustainable tourism in the popular destination.

The new module is the second destination-specific course introduced to the academy and reflects the growing importance of sustainability among travellers.

France now joins CATO Touring Academy as a featured destination, giving travel professionals the opportunity to explore what makes the destination a leading example of sustainable travel and tourism.

"We're thrilled to welcome Atout France to the CATO Touring Academy and to add this valuable new module on sustainable tourism in France," Managing Director Brett Jardine said.

"Supporting travel professionals with up-to-date, destination-specific knowledge is key to ensuring they can craft meaningful, responsible travel experiences," he added.

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Cyber attack a key reminder: Choice

CONSUMER watchdog Choice believes the cyber attack on Qantas yesterday highlights the urgent need for a stronger ombud scheme to better support complaints from travellers.

The body argued that while the Australian Financial Complaints Authority and the Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman both consider financial and telco complaints regarding data breaches, there is currently no equivalent independent body for airline customers to raise concerns when cyber attacks occur.

"This a huge gap in our consumer protection system," Choice Senior Policy Advisor Bea Sherwood warned.

"[Yesterday's] cyber attack (**TD** 02 Jul) on Qantas has left millions of customer records at serious risk of being stolen, and despite ongoing issues with Qantas and other airlines, customers still



don't have an effective means of directing or resolving their complaints," she concluded.

While an Aviation White Paper released in Aug last year (**TD** 26 Aug 2024) has already confirmed a new aviation industry ombud scheme will be created with the power to enforce better consumer standards from 2026, Choice has remained critical of the details so far supplied by the policy recommendation.

Earlier this year, the body called for the government to clarify how a new consumer rights charter will be used by the upcoming aviation ombud scheme to resolve disputes.

Meanwhile, the MD of cyber company BlueVoyant, Kash

Sharma, said airlines like Qantas are becoming increasingly vulnerable due to the size and complexity of their digital ecosystems - especially through their reliance on third-party vendors and service providers.

"The aviation sector in the region is under immense strain as it juggles worker shortages, geopolitical risks and economic pressures," Sharma explained.

"It is clear that attackers are exploiting systemic weaknesses, particularly in sprawling supply chain ecosystems that often lack rigorous security governance.

"Threat actors are now promoting customisable and AI-powered toolkits, pointing to a professionalised ecosystem of cybercrime that outpaces current defence across the sector."

Impacted Qantas customers have been contacted by the carrier to instruct them on how to handle possible breaches. **AB**

Premium partners

CORPORATE Travel Management (CTM) has welcomed the activation of Qantas' new NDC retailing model this month, spruiking the benefits of becoming an early invite-only premium partner.

CTM customers enabled with its proprietary Lightning online booking technology will now benefit from discounts of up to 6.5% on traditional fares and exclusive travel content.

The premium NDC offering is expected to deliver significant value to customers above standard NDC content, including full access to NDC sale fares and future NDC products and services to be announced by Qantas.

CTM subsidiary 1000 Mile Travel Group has also become a premium partner, which it said marked a "meaningful shift" in how air content is delivered to independent advisors.

CTM was an early adopter of NDC technology in 2019.

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ME conflict fails to deter bookings

EXCLUSIVE

CONSUMERS may be concerned about the Middle East conflict, but it is not stopping them from travelling to the region, according to operators.

Bunnik Tours is still seeing interest in Egypt and Jordan, although more travellers are assessing the situation first and booking their trips closer to the time of departure, said General Manager, Annelieke Huijgens.

"As they are such big bucket-list destinations, we are finding clients are still keen to tick them off," she told **Travel Daily**.

"In fact, in the second half of this year, our passenger numbers to the region are up 112% compared to last year."

Travel operator Forward Travel has also adjusted its itineraries that include the affected regions, with some clients happy to enjoy a rerouted schedule, while others are postponing their trips.



"We've noticed that many of our clients remain interested in the region and have been happy to shift to neighbouring countries that offer similar experiences cultural and historically without the associated risks, such as Oman, Jordan and countries in north Africa," the company's owner David Smyth said.

He has also noted an increased demand for flexibility and queries around cancellation and rerouting policies, pushing the company "to work even more closely with our partners on the ground to provide accurate, timely advice and options".

Forward Travel is also offering

more generous terms and conditions around amendments and cancellations, and clearer communication around coverage.

"We've found that when we provide context, explaining where risks exist, where they don't, and how we're monitoring developments, clients respond positively," he said.

"It becomes a collaborative planning process rather than a simple yes-or-no discussion."

Other advisors like MTA's Annie Morrison however have noticed a drop in interest in the region.

"I have not received any new enquiries for travel to anywhere in the Middle East, which is unusual," she revealed.

Some clients have also asked for an Asian alternative to Middle Eastern carriers on Euro trips.

"I feel CX, SQ, MH and TG will see more traffic for 2026 Euro summer," added itravel's Geoff Currie. **JHM**

Mozambique safer

SMARTTRAVLLER has lowered its advice level for Aussies visiting Mozambique to level 2, 'exercise a high degree of caution'.

The reason for the downgrade is the dissipation of protests and strikes that occurred following elections in Oct 2024, with recent months seeing a decrease in their frequency and severity.

Previously the advice was set at 'reconsider your need to travel', with the government advisory highlighting that certain areas of the African country should still be avoided by travellers.

DFAT continues to advise against travelling to Cabo Delgado province, and the Erati and Memba districts of Nampula province, due to the extreme threat of terrorism, kidnapping, and ongoing clashes between armed groups and security forces.

Aussies should also reconsider their need to travel to Marrupa and Mecula districts of Niassa due to the security situation.

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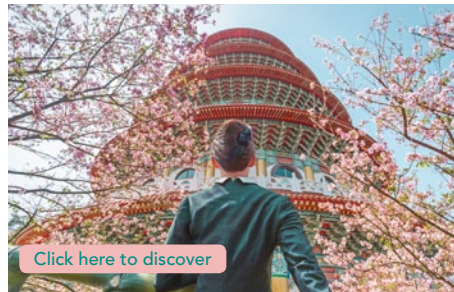
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Explora adds loyalty

THE second phase of Explora Journey's loyalty program has launched, offering members a range of new privileges.

Every night sailed on board, eligible ship purchases and destination experience bookings now contribute to earning points.

Monarto opens the gate



MONARTO Safari Resort has officially opened its doors, hosting a large contingent of industry executives and travel media on-site this week.

Guests received a tour of the new resort and toasted the opening inside Wild Africa, a specially designed 550-hectare area adjacent to Monarto Safari Park, home to over 750 animals across another 1,550 hectares.

Journey Beyond will manage the operations of the resort, which opened to the public on 28 May.

CEO Chris Tallent said, "There's no doubt that this will become one of the most iconic travel experiences in Australia."

"The 78 rooms and suites overlook the stunning new Wild Africa Precinct created by Zoos South Australia," he said.

"It features a magnificent restaurant, two bars, two swimming pools, conference facilities, and a world-class spa - it

truly is the first of its kind on this scale in the country."

Tallent added Journey Beyond had found exceptional partners to bring the project to life.

Gerry Ryan, owner of Monarto Safari Resort added, "You can see the quality of workmanship, and during COVID, it was a long build, and trying to get tradies out here was difficult".

"Our architects have done a fantastic job - Studio Graham, interior designs, well done - but I know it's been a drawn-out saga."

Also launched was the Marula day spa experience within the open landscapes of Monarto Safari Park and endorsed by beauty brand Jurlique.

The spa features treatment rooms with expansive views, a private sauna, vitality pool, cold plunge pool.

It also offers massages, facials, bespoke wellness packages and is available for bookings now. *DF*

Anji expands role

REGENT Seven Seas Cruises' BDM Anji Montgomerie will now oversee New Zealand, in addition to managing Qld and the NT.

Montgomerie joined RSSC in Apr and brings more than 15 years of experience from other companies, such as GFOB.

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Senegal returns jets

AIR Senegal's ongoing financial problems have led the west African carrier to return four aircraft to lessor Carlyle Aviation.

The airline was reportedly unable to make the payments for the planes amid mounting of debts of around US\$150 million, despite rescue funding from the Senegalese Govt and IATA.

As a result, the carrier has been forced to drastically slash its route network, currently maintaining only one international service from Dakar to Paris.

Finnair cancellations

AROUND 100 Finnair flights were cancelled yesterday because of strike action by the Finnish Aviation Union, affecting ground services essential for operations.

The cancellations played havoc with the travel plans of roughly 7,000 passengers in and out of major hubs like Helsinki, with the carrier stating it had contacted affected customers directly.

Unfortunately, the turbulent scheduling for the Finnish carrier looks set to continue, with industrial action planned for several days throughout Jul.

The strike action is in response to a disagreement between workers and employment group Palta over a promised pay raise.



International Rail evolves



EVOLUTION Travel Collective (ETC) has added wholesaler International Rail as a client, providing the brand with business development and marketing representation in Australia.

Travel advisors can reach out to their local Evolution BDM effective immediately for any support with International Rail.

"ETC's deep knowledge of the local market and their exceptional track record in the travel industry make them the ideal partner for us," said International Rail Chief Executive Officer Jonathan Hume, pictured with ETC Managing Director Ingrid Berthelsen.

"With their support, we are confident that our 20-year-old business will gain even greater awareness of how we are offering agents exceptional locally based customer service," he added.

Berthelsen said that having worked in rail wholesale for over 12 years, she understood the immense value of providing

agents with a one-stop shop to booking rail services and the incredible potential this partnership holds.

It has been a busy few months for International Rail, having inked a deal with Explore Worldwide to connect some of its tours with rail journeys (**TD** 30 May), and appointed Kirsty Blows as its first-ever New Zealand-based Business Development Manager (**TD** 09 Apr). *MS/AB*

SAS Embraer order

SCANDINAVIAN Airlines System (SAS) has put in an order for 55 aircraft through Embraer in a deal worth around US\$4 billion.

Off the back of the order, the plane manufacturer's shares jumped up by 5.5% on Wed, sending it to an all-time high.

SAS' purchase includes 45 E195-E2 aircraft, with options for an additional 10, and is set to be delivered by 2027.



Window Seat

ASKING to switch places on an aircraft is one of the thorniest topics in the travel world, and according to recent research, many Australians would not be willing to lend a hand...or a seat.

Almost a third (31%) of Australians said they would not swap seats on an aircraft to help another passenger, if it is an upgrade, a study by TravellInsurance.com.au found.

A similar number (30%) said they'd refuse to switch seats on an international flight at all, no matter who was asking.

That leaves just 34% of Australians willing to swap seats on an international flight unconditionally, simply to help a fellow passenger.

Seat swapping has become a far more nuanced decision recently, with comfort, cost, and context all playing a role.

Gen X (37%) are the most likely to happily swap seats with a fellow passenger to help out, while Millennials on the other hand are the most likely to agree to a swap, but only if they get an equivalent or better seat (41%).

Gen Z are a bit more hesitant, with 37% saying they wouldn't switch if it meant ending up in a worse seat.

I wonder how many have themselves asked to swap?



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Expertise Flower

AUSTRALIAN event management company Expertise Events has officially adopted the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower initiative across its entire events portfolio.

The globally recognised program allows individuals with non-visible disabilities to voluntarily and discreetly indicate they may need extra support, time or understanding.

Expertise Events will educate its venue staff, volunteers, exhibitors and show partners on recognising and respecting the Sunflower lanyard and badge.

"We're proud to embrace the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower to help create inclusive, understanding environments across all of our exhibitions and shows," said MD Gary Fitz-Roy.

Sunny Soiree returns

VISIT Sunshine Coast has opened up expressions of interest for its signature business events networking opportunity, the Sunshine Soiree.

Event manager professionals can register interest in joining the exclusive luncheon, which will take place on Fri 15 Aug 2025 at the Sunshine Coast Turf Club.

This year's event will feature a race day theme, with attendees to enjoy a long lunch, bubbles, and prizes - find out more [HERE](#).

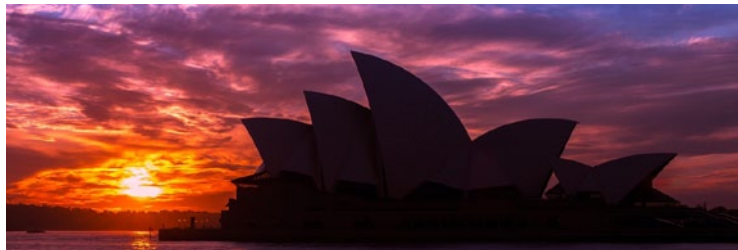
NSW TO RETAIN EVENTS CROWN

NEW South Wales is shaping up to hold onto its crown as the nation's business events capital, with the sector forecast to inject more than \$192 million into the state's visitor economy in 2025.

Business Events Sydney has already secured 57 events for this year, which are expected to generate \$186 million in direct expenditure, with more events still in the pipeline.

Destination NSW's regional business events program, Business Events NSW, has also helped win another 57 events, which will generate 14,500 visitor nights and more than \$6 million in direct expenditure.

"Business events attract high-value visitors to NSW and the NSW Government has ambitious plans to turbocharge its domination in the sector," NSW Minister for Tourism Steve Kamper said.



"The opening of Newcastle Airport's international terminal and Western Sydney International Airport will make it even more attractive for organisations to choose Sydney and regional NSW as immersive destinations for their next conference, corporate meeting or incentive event."

In 2024, NSW welcomed 6.48 million business events visitors, including 3.41 million to Sydney, outdoing second-best Victoria, which recorded 4.84 million business events visitors, while Melbourne attracted 3.06 million.

MEANWHILE, Regional NSW has just received a major boost, with more than \$1.3 million in funding awarded to 61 events through the 2025/26 Regional Event Fund.

From festivals to cultural and sporting events, the successful recipients will help uplift local economies by attracting visitors from outside the region.

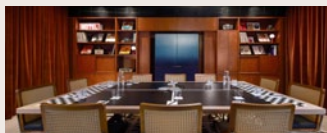
Kamper said, "This investment... will give certainty to event organisers across the state to elevate their offerings and reach new audiences". JM

Delegates enticed to get mulled at Moxy

MOXY Sydney Airport has launched its new winter MICE campaign, inviting event professionals and delegates to 'Get Mulled at Moxy'.

Available for bookings made by 30 Sep 2025, the meeting package costs \$89 for a full day or \$79 for half day, which includes hire and set up, arrival tea and coffee, morning and afternoon tea breaks, lunch, and access to the audio system.

Moxy has sweetened the deal



with a glass of mulled wine served with decadent cheese and charcuterie platters.

The hotel boasts five flexible event rooms with a capacity of 65, each featuring plug-and-play LED screens, the latest audio/visual tech, video-conferencing, whiteboards, and ultra-fast wi-fi.

Amora EOFY deal

AMORA Hotel Brisbane is offering an end-of-financial-year special for those who book and host an event before 31 Jul 2025.

The offer includes a choice of one of the following perks: a free coffee cart; 30-minute canape package; \$300 dining voucher at dapl Restaurant; or a free basic AV package.

The MICE deal also includes 10% off the next booking - [CLICK HERE](#) for more details.

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VisitBritain has appointed **Kristen Angus** as Country Manager for Australia and New Zealand. Based in Sydney, she will oversee the DMO's strategy across B2B, travel trade, PR and UK public diplomacy relations in both Australia and New Zealand. Most recently, Angus served as VisitBritain's Head of Marketing for the Middle East and Asia.

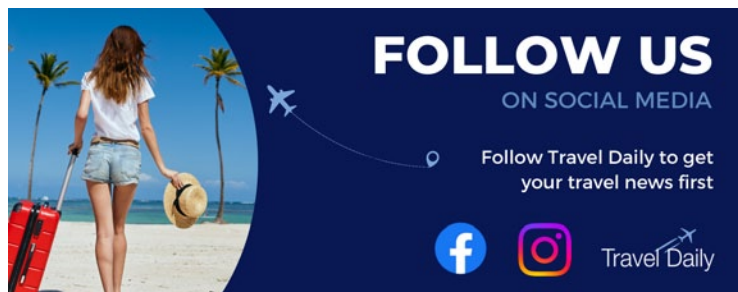
Effective 01 Sep, **Terry Sinclair** will join **Kelsian Group Limited**, which owns the SeaLink and Caption Cook Cruises brands, as a Non-Executive Director. Sinclair brings extensive board and executive experience across several sectors, and will serve as a member of both the People, Culture & Remuneration and the Safety, Risk & Sustainability committees.

Voyages Indigenous Tourism Australia has welcomed **Pete Larke** as Director of People & Culture, supporting the teams across Ayers Rock Resort, Mossman Gorge Cultural Centre and the company's corporate offices in Sydney. Larke's previous travel industry experience includes Head of HR at Royal Caribbean Group and Head of People & Culture at The Travel Corporation.

The team at **Tourism Tasmania** has grown with the addition of **Robert Verschuer** as Head of PR. Once the Domestic PR Manager at Tourism NT, Verschuer is now tasked with leading the Tassie DMO's marketing program across domestic and international markets.

Adventure World has strengthened its leadership with two key appointments - **Anna Burgdorf** as Head of Product and **Emily Fernandes** as New Zealand National Sales Manager.

Sydney-based **Christine Gardiner** has been hired by **Armstrong Collective** as its new Sales Development Manager representing Canadian rail-tour company Rocky Mountaineer and the new US brand Canyon Spirit for NSW, ACT, NT and Queensland. Gardiner joins from Silversea Cruises, where she worked for eight years.



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Having the best time



THE Best of the Best (BOTB) luxury tourism collaboration has gone global, holding its first offshore event at the new COMO Metropolitan Singapore.

Six of the seven BOTB partners gathered at the new hotel ahead of the International Luxury Travel Market taking place this week.

BOTB was also joined by two additional supplier guests, Svetlana Jovanovic from Jean-Michel Cousteau Resort and Claire Neil from Visit Monaco, as the group hosted 32 luxury advisors at the event.

COMO Hotels & Resorts Executive Vice President Doris Goh welcomed the group to

enjoy a lunch in COMO Cuisine Restaurant, while listening to the latest updates from each of the collective's representatives.

BOTB is celebrating its 14th year of showcasing its product to the industry, having expanded from its initial offering of selected hotels to cruise lines, airlines, and destinations. **MS**

Pictured are Jovanovic; Anastasia Kotanidis, The Ritz-Carlton Yacht Collection; Thushara Liyanarachchi, The Fabulous Getaway; Lynne Ireland, Virgin Hotels; Goh; Brenda Nash, Uga Escapes; Jen Pagett, Uniwold River Cruises; Tony Knox, SBM; and Neil.

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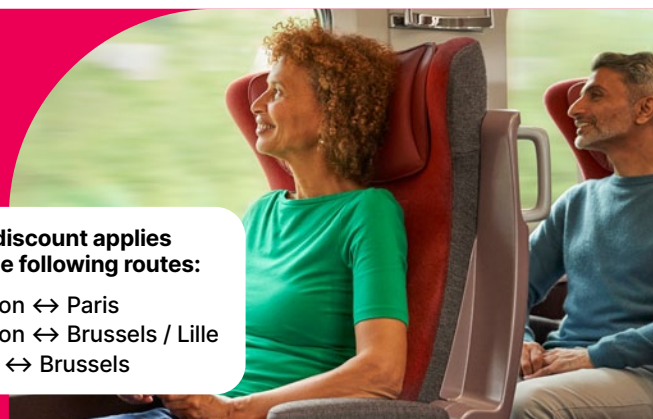
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Training Module

Submit your ticket claim as follows: Y class \$40, PY \$60, and J class \$100 per ticket by COB on 31 JUL 2025 to promotions@consolidatedtravel.com.au for verification

Terms and Conditions: This promotion is valid for ex-Australia tickets issued by Consolidated Travel or via QuikTravel (QT) between 04JUN25 and 13JUL25, for travel from 04JUN25 to 31DEC25 on Lufthansa Group airlines (LH, LX, OS, SN) and all codeshare partners ex-AU only. Tickets must be plated on LH (220), LX (724), OS (257), or SN (082) issued on Consolidated Travel IATA only. Cabin Class definitions: Y = Economy Class, P = Premium Economy Class, J = Business Class. Infant, Group, Wholesale, Cancelled, No-show, or Refunded tickets are not eligible. **Submit your ticket claim as follows: Y class \$40, PY \$60, and J class \$100 per ticket by COB on 31 JUL 2025 to promotions@consolidatedtravel.com.au for verification.** Promotion is open to full-time, Australian-registered retail travel agents. Agents who successfully complete a short awareness training component via Google Forms will automatically be entered into the weekly random draw to win one of 3 pairs of Apple AirPods (ANC) weekly, valued at approximately \$300 each. Winners will be notified and receive Apple AirPods after the campaign concludes. Training awareness entries close COB 08JUL25. Receipt of a prize may have Fringe Benefits Tax (FBT) implications to the extent that there is any FBT liability; this will be paid for by the employer of the recipient. The grossed-up value of a prize and any other Fringe Benefits the recipients receive during the course of the FBT year may be reported on the recipient's annual PAYG Payment Summary as required by taxation law. All prizes include GST where applicable, and taxes are included in the price of the ticket. Consolidated Travel Group ABN 60 004 692 791 Date of issue: 04 JUN 2025