

Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today features six pages, including **Business Events News**, plus a full page from **Viva Holidays**.

Viva la Virginia

VIVA Holidays has all the information agents need to know for trips to the US state of Virginia - see **page seven** for details.

Trodd now on board

FOUR Seasons and Marc-Henry Cruise Holdings - joint owner and operator of Four Seasons Yachts - have appointed Ben Trodd as CEO of Marc-Henry Cruise Holdings.

The 25-year veteran of the Four Seasons brand returns to the company to help steer the launch of its much-hyped cruise brand next year, with Trodd bringing a unique combination of brand and luxury insight to the position.

Four Seasons I will debut in Jan 2026, where she will sail the Caribbean, followed by the Med.

Fundell exits Globus

CHRIS Fundell (**pictured**), Head of Marketing Asia Pacific for Globus family of brands (GFOB), has announced he will depart the business after a 10-year tenure (**TD** breaking news).

Fundell joined GFOB in 2015 as the National Marketing Manager, before an upward trajectory saw him take charge of the marketing function across the APAC region.

During his time at GFOB, which includes Avalon Waterways and Cosmos, new APAC boss Chris Hall said Fundell "was integral to pivoting our product offering and marketing channels to drive revenue and accelerate growth through and out of Covid, contributing to the overall success of [Globus]".

"We are sorry to see him go and we wish him all the best with his future endeavours," Hall added.

Fundell said: "Together we've evolved the marketing set up to be data driven and agile, growing



new distribution channels, improving brand awareness and growth."

His last day with GFOB will be 29 Aug, with the business now on the lookout for its new marketing leader across APAC.

Those interested have been encouraged to email GFOB on hr@globusfamily.com.au.

No announcement has been made yet about what Fundell plans to do next. *DF*

Intrepid takes control

INTREPID Travel has taken full ownership of WA-based adventure tourism business and DMC WA-based Jump Out Of Bed (JOOB), following a majority stake purchase (**TD** 13 Sep 2022).

JOOB brands Inspiration Outdoors and Waratah Adventure Tours will now carry Intrepid branding on the ground.

The company said the full acquisition deepens its investment in walking and trekking experiences, as well as First Nations experiences.

Brand USA revs up

BRAND USA has launched its 'Route 66: A Deep Drive' webinar series in collaboration with Destination Webinars, designed exclusively for travel agents across Australia & New Zealand.

The series will run from Jul 2025 to Mar 2026 - register **HERE**.

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NCL takes its TIME

NORWEGIAN Cruise Line (NCL) has provided a new scholarship opportunity through the TIME (Travel Industry Mentor Experience) program.

Applications are open to eligible employees in travel for Program 64, which commences on 29 Oct.

Farewell Mr Manwaring



AFTER 22 years as the CEO of Express Travel Group, Tom Manwaring was celebrated this week by the Helloworld-owned brand with a special luncheon.

Travel Daily broke the news of Manwaring's departure in May (**TD** 20 May), a move that has seen Jason Aghan promoted to the position of Group General Manager - ETG.

While Manwaring will not be completely severing ties with ETG as he stays on in a Non-Executive Chairman capacity, the decision will see him step away from the cut and thrust of travel after more than half-a-century of service.

"We all wish Tom the very best as he sets off on this new exciting chapter," ETG said.

"His steady leadership and outstanding commitment to our industry have left a lasting mark on everyone here at ETG.

"The existing executive leadership team will continue to grow the incredible legacy Tom has built, and have completed a slight restructure to best support the business moving forward."

Further restructuring of the HLO division includes Vlado Ristevski taking on the new role of GM - Sales and Express Tickets.

Alisha Dopfer has also been retitled as General Manager - Partnerships, ETG.

She will maintain responsibility for collaboration with preferred partners, while also taking on leadership for marketing, the agency support centre, as well as the Alatus network. **AB**

Observe how you like

THE Empire State Building has created a new online-only earlybird ticket that allows guests to enter the Observatory 30 mins before it opens to the public.

A limited number of tickets are available each day, with the earlier 8.30am timeslot able to be selected during online checkout.

A flex ticket has also been launched, allowing visitors to choose the date and time they wish to visit the Observatory at a later slot of their choosing, regardless of peak times.

BA adds two more

BRITISH Airways has added Rabat in Morocco and Graz in Austria to its London network.

Graz brings the airline's Austrian destinations to four, joining Vienna, Salzburg, and Innsbruck, while Gatwick-based subsidiary BA Euroflyer will fly to Rabat.



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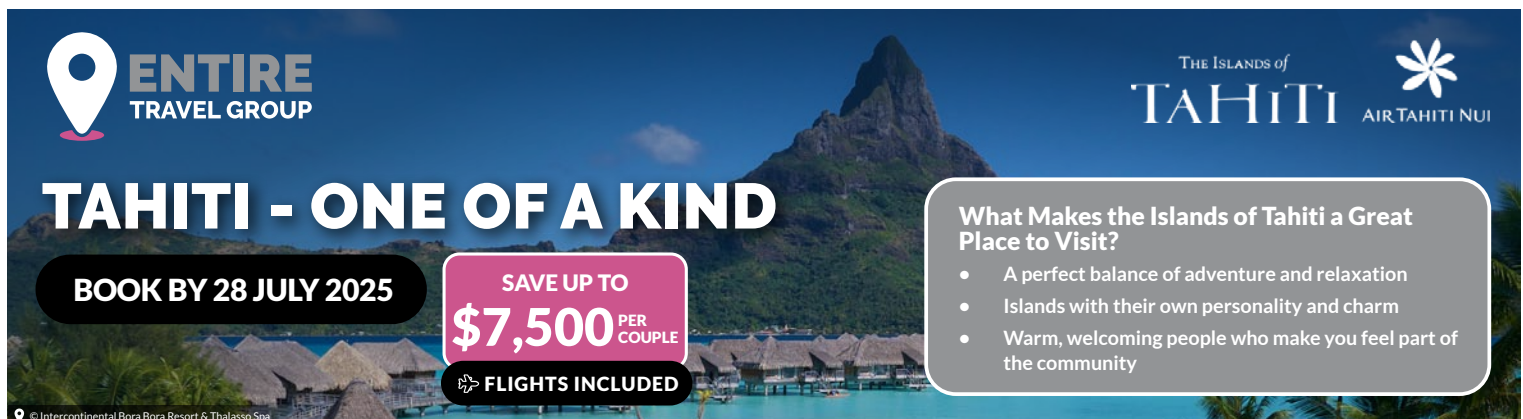


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Perception change needed

MANY travellers in the Asia Pacific still associate booking travel through advisors with OTAs that do not charge direct service fees, fostering an expectation that travel planning should be complimentary or covered by suppliers through commissions.

The mindset hurdle to the fee-based agency model was identified in the World Travel Agents Associations Alliance's (WTAAA) new white paper, which suggested a clearer value proposition strategy is needed.

"Advisors must clearly communicate what their fee covers, emphasising their time investment, expertise, supplier relationships, risk management cancellations, and personalised planning," the report noted.

In North America, WTAAA observed that a tiered pricing approach had been especially successful in ramping up client acceptance of charges, which has



included flexibility like refundable consultation deposits.

In emerging markets, the report found that advisors have been more successful when including service breakdowns in quotes to reinforce transparency, which dialled down the chances of any bill shock outcomes.

One common concern among advisors highlighted is the worry of driving clients to competitors who don't charge fees, an anxiety that is strong in markets where there has been a sharp rise in budget-conscious travellers.

However, the paper suggested agents should emphasise exclusive deals, VIP perks, and personalised itinerary curation to counteract client loss worries. *AB*

Win a trip to Norway

TWO top-selling agents will each win an eight-day adventure to Norway as part of a new trade incentive from 50 Degrees North.

Launched to promote its Nordic winter small group tours, the campaign also features reduced deposits starting from \$600pp, and a complimentary pre- or post-tour night in select cities.

The grand prize includes a stay at the iconic Snowhotel Kirkenes, a southbound expedition cruise with Havila, and one night at the Opus XVI hotel in Bergen.

To be in the running, agents must sell places on four eligible itineraries encompassing Norway, Sweden and Finland departing between Jan-Mar 2026.

CLICK HERE for more details.



You Beck-er believe it

CRUISE Lines International Association's line-up of speakers at Cruise360 next month will be headlined by new Windstar Cruises MD Helen Beck.

The speaker program, revealed yesterday by **Travel Daily's** sister title **Cruise Weekly**, will also include Cunard Line Senior Vice President North America & Australia Liz Fettes; Celebrity Cruises Vice President International Giles Hawke; and Princess Cruises Director Deployment & Itinerary Planning Debbie Holbrook.

Other international guests include Disney Cruise Line VP International Sales & Marketing Jeff van Langeveld; MSC Cruises & Explora Journeys VP International Sales Antonio Paradiso; and Swan Hellenic Expedition Operations Manager Jane Wilson.

Another popular addition is Regent Seven Seas Cruises & Oceania Cruises SVP International & Consumer Sales Steve Odell.

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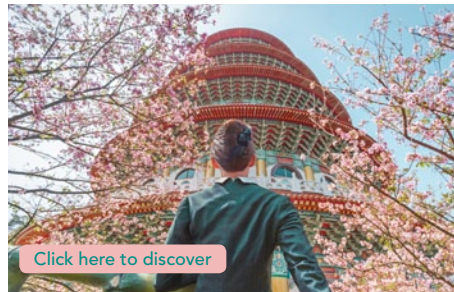


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Travel Daily

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Keep your shoes on

MORE advanced screening technology has led the United States Department of Homeland Security to scrap the need for travellers to take their shoes off while passing airport screenings.

The rule, which was brought in after a failed terror act by Richard 'Shoe Bomber' Reid, had previously sought to check footwear for possible explosives.

Dropping the check should significantly reduce wait times for passengers at airports across the country, the TSA anticipates.

Bunnik Asia launch

BUNNIK Tours is capitalising on strong demand for its small group journeys in Sri Lanka, with the country headlining the operator's new 2026 Asia program.

The move comes on the back of a 150% jump in bookings of Bunnik's 'Sri Lanka in Style' tour, along with a 43% spike in its 'Sri Lanka Discovery' itinerary.

Bunnik's new season features itineraries in Japan; South Korea; India; Vietnam; and the '5 Stans', the latter showcased via a new 29-day adventure visiting Kazakhstan; Kyrgyzstan; Tajikistan; Turkmenistan; and Uzbekistan.

Further highlights include two departures of a special 'Colours of Rajasthan' trip in Nov 2026 which takes in the Pushkar Festival.

Travellers can also pair the 14-day 'South Korea in depth' tour with itineraries in Japan to explore the two countries.

G's Sri Lanka return

AFTER a five-year break, G Adventures is relaunching its sailings through Sri Lanka, with the seven-day 'Sri Lanka Sailing - South Coast' itinerary, which can be added to a land tour.

According to the operator, the brand has seen a 29% increase in demand for the South Asian country in the past 12 months.

The sailing's departures kick off in Dec, starting and ending in the southern town of Mirissa.

AW winner off to Peru



HELLOWORLD Travel's Leisa Davis (**pictured**) is the winner of Adventure World's Machu Picchu Sell & Win travel advisor initiative, scoring an eight-day trip for two to Peru, valued at \$7,000.

To be in the draw to win the trip, agents had to make new Adventure World South or Central American bookings between 23 Nov 2024 and 16 May 2025.

Davis is the owner/Manager/Director of Helloworld Travel Biloela, Rockhampton and Gladstone, and has worked with Adventure World for 30 years.

"The products and quality are excellent, and I know that when I

use their suppliers, clients always provide good feedback and want to use them again," she said of the purpose-led tour operator.

"Their staff are knowledgeable and reliable...being able to have a reservation consultant [who] I can email at all hours and know that I will get a reply, is integral."

Davis will explore destinations including Lima, Sacred Valley, Cusco and of course, the iconic Machu Picchu.

"Adventure World have been crafting unforgettable journeys to this region for over 40 years and it is always exciting for us to offer travel advisors the opportunity to experience the magic of Peru firsthand," said Elsa McLean, Head of Sales for Adventure World. *JHM*

Thailand folds plan

LONG-TERM ambitions to make Thailand a mecca for casino resorts (**TD** 15 Jan) have been withdrawn, with the country's cabinet dropping a bill to legalise casino gambling this week.

Thai lawmakers said the move has been formally suspended because more study needs to be done on possible social impacts.

Previously, the Thai Government said that while visitation is growing steadily, boosting its tourism appeal with casino resorts could see numbers swell by 5-10%, and travel revenue increase by as much as 40%.



Window Seat

IN AN important announcement from the TSA, it has been confirmed that travellers in the US will not be allowed to use Costco membership cards as an acceptable form of identification when attempting to clear airport security.

Rumour had spread wildly on social media that the discount retailer's members could use their card as travel ID, but alas, this is not the case.

"We love hotdogs & rotisserie chickens as much as the next person but please stop telling people their Costco card counts as a REAL ID because it absolutely does not," as per a TSA statement on X, the media platform formerly known as Twitter and far more reputable (ahem).

TD sent Editor Adam Bishop to try to use his Costco card at US airport security.

He hasn't been seen since.



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EVENTSAIR LAUNCHES ACADEMY

EVENT management technology brand EventsAir has launched a new customer e-learning hub designed to simplify onboarding and boost confidence for planners using the system.

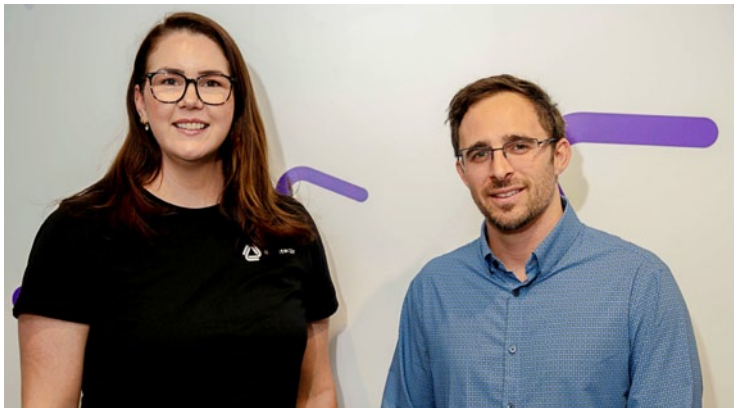
The new EventsAir Academy is now live and available for all new and existing customers through the platform's main dashboard.

EventsAir Academy comes as a result of a partnership with online training platform HowToo, with the new resource hosted by its Learning Management System.

Materials have been set up to provide a clear and intuitive learning journey, which users can take at their own pace.

EventsAir Chief Customer Officer Renee Elliott said she is very proud of what the new learning hub provides for users.

"Our platform is powerful, and with that comes complexity. "This gives our customers a



smarter, simpler way to learn at their own pace while unlocking the full value of EventsAir from day one," Elliott said.

HowToo Head of Growth and Partnerships Alex Richardson said the company is happy to join with EventsAir to unite two leaders in cutting-edge technology and domain expertise.

"EventsAir are the experts in event management technology,

and HowToo are the experts in learning," Richardson said.

"Together, we're opening up new possibilities for pre- and post-event content that help organisers extend engagement and impact beyond the event itself," he added.

Further modules, tutorials and best practice guides will be added to EventsAir Academy in time. *ML Elliott and Richard are pictured.*

Capella spaces

PONTIAC Land Group has unveiled a collection of five event spaces set to feature at The Lands by Capella, which will be co-located as a luxury extension of Capella Sydney.

Opening early next year, the venues form part of The Sandstone Precinct, a new project set within the historic Department of Lands building in the CBD.

Venues include The Capella Ballroom, a heritage space featuring high ceilings and arched windows capable of seating up to 250 guests.

Also available will be The Liberty Ballroom, which will cater to 120 guests for premium corporate or exclusive private events.

Three other suites will sit under the Meetings Suite group, with The Botanist Suite and The Surveyors Suite catering for up to 40 guests and The Explorers Suite able to welcome 80 delegates.

Each space has been tailored to suit the historic building's original configuration, which architect firm Hassell said has been done to reduce the impact on its heritage appeal and deliver on functionality.

"We've taken a long-underutilised site and reawakened its original grandeur," said Hassell MD Liz Westgath.

Events go west

BANKSTOWN Sports Club has launched Western Sydney's first full-service multi-venue event space, with doors opening this week.

Known as Azalea Collective, the venue comes with in-house planning, catering and production support across a collection of different spaces.

Three venues form part of the launch offering including a rooftop bar and brewhouse.

Baini joins the ABEA board of directors

INCENTIVE and conference travel innovator Colette Baini has joined the Board of the Australian Business Events Association (ABEA).

Baini is the founder and CEO of The Conference Room and Australia Conferences & Incentives and brings a strong reputation in special events.

ABEA Chairman Peter King said Baini is well regarded and brings extensive expertise and



passion to the board.

"As we celebrate our second anniversary, ABEA continues to enjoy strong interest and active participation from all sectors of the industry," King commented.

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Alaska Airlines has promoted **Alisa Onishi** to Managing Director of Hawaii Marketing for both Alaska and Hawaiian Airlines. Onishi will lead marketing, guest experience enhancements, and integration for Hawaiian Airlines, while also advancing Hawaiian and Alaska's multi-brand strategy.

Kristine George has been promoted to PR Director at **The Walshe Group**. George has spent three-and-a-half years at the company, and was previously at Destination NSW. The move upward will still see George maintain her Account Management role for NYC Tourism + Conventions, Delta Air Lines, and South African Airways.

Sarah Derry has returned to the travel industry as **The Star Entertainment Group's** Chief People Officer. Derry was formerly Accor's Chief Executive Officer Pacific from Feb 2022-Mar 2024, and has since spent almost 18 months pursuing a range of other projects.

Simon Dodd has started a new position as Head of Travel Guard & Global Business Development at **Cover-More Travel Insurance**. The role is a step up for Dodd, who most recently served as Regional Head of Asia Pacific for the company's Travel Guard division.

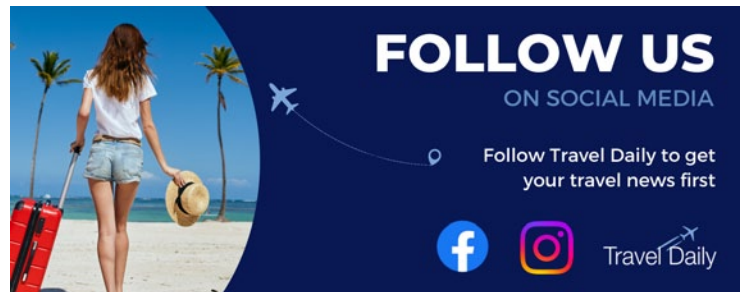
Atlas Ocean Voyages has announced **Kristian Anderson** has joined the cruise line as Executive Vice President of Global Sales. The long-time cruise executive brings experience from a range of brands, such as Silversea, Uniworld Boutique River Cruises, and The Ritz-Carlton Yacht Collection, where he most recently served as Senior Vice President Global Sales.

Tim Harrison has kicked off a new chapter in his career as Head of Sales North America for **APT Travel Group**. Harrison most recently served as Inspiring Vacations' Manager Strategic Partnerships for just over a year.

Sam Panetta has been announced as the new General Manager of **Accor's** Sofitel Sydney Darling Harbour, succeeding Greg Brady, who has retired. Panetta brings a distinguished career spanning more than two decades in luxury hospitality to the job, having held senior roles across a number of Accor brands.

Destination wedding platform **Wedded Wonderland** has promoted **Lara Osborn** to Marketing & Partnerships Manager. Osborn has played a pivotal role in shaping the company's marketing direction, brand strategy, and regional partnerships over the past five years, the business said, as she is now charged with driving further growth across Australia and surrounding markets.

Andrew Donadel has started a new position as Vice President of Operations Southern Region at **Stamford Hotels & Resorts**. Donadel brings with him around two decades of experience in the luxury accommodation sector.



FCTG rocks Brisbane



GLASTONBURY is so yesterday, and you can forget about Coachella - if you are in the travel industry and up with the times, the ticket you want in your hands is to Flichella.

What is Flichella?

It is the end of financial year celebration for Flight Centre Travel Group (FCTG), this year held at the Brisbane Showgrounds, and themed 'All Aussie Muster'.

Almost 4,000 'Flighties' flocked to the Sunshine State, where guests were asked to don their best flannelette shirt, boots, and Akubra hat.

Attendees enjoyed a nostalgia-filled celebration complete with farm animals, corn dogs, dodgem cars, a ferris wheel, and a slew of iconic Aussie musical acts, including Tuffy, Luke Cleave, Open Season Band, Lime Cordiale, ARC (pictured)

and Anna Lunoe.

FCTG Managing Director Australia James Kavanagh said the event provided an annual opportunity for team members from the company's many brands around the country to come together and celebrate their achievements from the year.

"Celebration is a big part of our culture here at FCTG, and Flichella is the most talked-about event on the company's social calendar.

"It's really special seeing interstate teams come together and reunite on the day after many a virtual meeting."

It has been a mixed financial performance for FCTG this year, with its positive half-year 7% YoY increase in underlying profit before tax and 3% increase on TTV YoY tempered by profit forecast downgrades and a stock price that has dropped over 35% in the past year. DF

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