



## QF Bali proposal

**QANTAS** Group is seeking to permit Finnair to codeshare on its budget carrier Jetstar's services from Melbourne to Denpasar and beyond to Singapore.

The IASC said parties have until 28 Jul to make a submission on the Qantas request.

## Aussies to US up in May

**DESPITE** strong headwinds dampening visitation, Aussie travel to the United States in May grew by 12,600 visits on the previous month, new figures released by the ABS has showed.

A surge in short-term trips taken by Aussies saw the US jump up two spots to fourth place, with the 69,370 visits moving the market past China and Thailand, which recorded 61,380 and 51,610, respectively.

The encouraging figures arrive at an alleviating time for the US visitor economy, which this month continued to see YoY



volumes dip in the face of major cuts to its tourism marketing body Brand USA, and a planned doubling of the ESTA fee from US\$21 to \$40 (**TD** 07 Jul).

Overall, there were 970,060 short-term trips taken in May - a 20.1% rise on May last year, but a drop on the 1,044,530 in Apr.

Indonesia topped the list by a significant margin with 149,080 trips, followed by New Zealand (83,020) and Japan (82,920). **AB**

## Airline slots satisfied

**QANTAS** and Virgin Australia say they are largely satisfied with their respective allocations of take-off and landing slots at Sydney Airport despite interest from int'l airlines (**TD** yesterday).

Qantas said allocations for both its main brand and Jetstar are in line with its scheduled objectives.

Meanwhile, Virgin Australia said it is satisfied with the allocation of slots for the next northern winter period, and will operate a schedule which largely aligns with its initial submission," a Virgin spokesperson told **TD**.

## Today's issue of TD

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

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**AGENTS** can secure up to \$8,000 in savings for their clients, when booking a suite on a Silversea voyage before 01 Sep.

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## More calls for green levy to go

A **PROPOSED** tax on premium air transport being pushed by the Global Solidarity Levies Task Force (GSLTF) has come under more pressure to be scrapped by major industry bodies.

Airports Council International (ACI) and Airlines for Europe (A4E) have both added their voices to criticise the recommendations put forward by the GSLTF, which is a coalition made up of France, Kenya, Barbados, Spain, Somalia, Benin, Sierra Leone, and Antigua and Barbuda.

The proposed tax aims to help a select group of countries mitigate the impact of climate change, and has already come under fire from IATA last week (**TD** 08 July).

ACI Europe Director General, Olivier Jankovec (**pictured**) said the idea was equivalent to "social-economic self-harm".

"[The tax] ignores the fact that what precisely sets aviation apart from other sectors is its ability



to support wider economic activity along with a wide range of positive societal outcomes - ranging from poverty reduction to gender equality and quality education," he said.

"It will also hamper progress towards our shared net zero goal by diverting much needed funding away from the sector."

Ourania Georgoutsakou, Managing Director at A4E added, "European airlines already collect multiple local, national and international taxes and levies

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and pay for the environmental impact of flying, be it under the EU ETS or with the significant investments in new aircraft and sustainable aviation fuel."

In a separate statement, ACI argued that in Europe, every 10% increase in air connectivity yields a 0.5% gain in GDP per capita, while also being associated with a 14% drop in poverty, 9% increase in quality education, 19% uptick in gender equality and an 8.5% gain in research & development.

ACI released research called 'Taxation of International Air Transport and Airports', which estimated the removal of the US\$90 billion in taxes paid by aviation users would create 5.2 million jobs and US\$180 billion in global GDP.

For its part, the GSLTF said "premium travel had seen a sharp rise in recent years with a 46% [rise] in emissions from private aviation between 2019-2023". **DF**

## Rail link coming in May

**THE** boom in European rail trips is about to get another boost, with major state-owned operators in three countries to add a new rail connection.

From May 2026, travellers will be able to ride a train from Prague to Copenhagen via Berlin, thanks to a collaboration between Deutsche Bahn, Danish Railways and Czech Railways.

The year-round daytime service will run in both directions, taking seven hours to travel between Copenhagen and Berlin, and roughly 11 hours between Copenhagen and Prague.

Summer night train extensions are also planned down the track, as well as additional stops in Dresden and Hamburg.



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## Waldorf reopens

**WALDORF** Astoria New York has begun welcoming guests again after a marathon eight-year renovation.

With a former capacity of 1,400, the refurbished hotel has reopened as a 375-room boutique hotel, with a 375-joined residential building attached.

The rooms, which lead in at US\$1,500 per night, have been significantly expanded, with most exceeding 50m<sup>2</sup>.

Even the smallest rooms are now twice the size of the originals, while average ceiling heights are around 2.5 metres.

## New Accor+ CEO

**TRAVEL** subscription program Accor Plus has welcomed Emilie Couton as its new Chief Executive Officer for the Asia Pacific region.

Couton has worked with Accor and its subsidiaries for the past two decades, including D-EDGE Hospitality Solutions, based in both Bangkok and Singapore.

"I'm genuinely thrilled to lead Accor Plus into its next phase, one where the member experience will continue to be at the absolute heart of everything we do," Couton said.

She replaces Renae Trimble, who departed earlier this year to take a role as the Chief Commercial Officer with the NRL.

Accor Plus currently boasts a regional membership of 450,000, who collectively redeemed one billion points last year for over 3.1 million free hotel nights.

## JQ to boost Philippines

**JETSTAR** will introduce two new services to the Philippines later this year, with year-round Perth to Manila flights launching on 27 Nov, and a seasonal Brisbane to Cebu route on 03 Dec.

Both services will operate three times a week using A321LR aircraft, and will add a combined 108,000 seats annually to the popular Asian nation.

The development follows Qantas adding Brisbane to Manila services in Oct last year (**TD 17** May), and parent Qantas Group renewing its capacity of 1,927 seats a week to the Philippines capital Manila in Jun.

Meanwhile, bilateral talks to double air service capacity between Australia and the Philippines have taken place this week, as local airlines seek to capitalise on demand between the two countries.

On the back of a 19.3% increase in Australian visitors



to the Philippines in 2024, the Civil Aeronautics Board (CAB) is seeking to increase seat capacity from 30,000 to 60,000 per week.

If granted, it is unclear whether Philippine Airlines and Cebu Pacific - the two Filipino airlines serving Australia - would seek to fly more frequently to Australia or expand service to other cities.

"The government requested these talks to give local carriers room to expand and respond to growing market demand," CAB Executive Director Carmelo Arcilla said last week. **AB/ML**

## China Airlines links

**FREE** wi-fi connectivity will be available to travellers in all cabin classes on China Airlines from next month, the airline advised.

The Taiwan-based carrier said the connection will be available on all Boeing 777-, Airbus A350- and A321-flown routes.

Travellers in premium economy and business class will have unrestricted browsing capability, while economy class can send messages throughout their flight.

Elite members of the carrier's Dynasty Flyer loyalty program will also be able to access unlimited web browsing regardless of cabin class booked.

## Saudi cruise rules

**SAUDI** Arabia has revealed its first-ever cruise ship regulations, which focus on ensuring maritime safety, security, and quality.

The new protocols also call out the role and responsibility of ship agents and port authorities, and simplify licenses and permits.

**malaysia airlines**

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## HX paddles farther

**HX HAS** launched its largest-ever kayaking and camping collection in Antarctica.

The program, starting in Oct, will almost quadruple kayaking capacity, and double camping spots to 60 guests per night.

Solo traveller access has also been expanded for kayaking and camping, with no partner now required for either activity.

There are also more types of kayaking available, HX said.



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- Watching the sunrise over the reef in Taha'a





## France pauses cruise ban

A **BAN** on medium to large cruise ships in Nice and Villefranche-sur-Mer in France has been blocked by a court ruling this week.

The law, which was slated to come into effect on 01 Jul next year, would have limited cruise ships to 450 passengers in Nice and 2,500 in Villefranche-sur-Mer.

The ruling came after Nice's Mayor, Christian Estrosi, unlawfully attempted to force



Royal Caribbean's *Voyager of the Seas* to leave while it was docked in the French Riviera on 03 Jul.

Following this incident, the Mayor reissued the ban with a new start date of 11 Jul, however this was challenged by the Prefet of the Alpes-Maritimes region.

This led the administrative court in Nice to issue a temporary injunction, stating that any attempt at a ban "would go against the freedom of movement for cruise ship passengers and the freedom of trade and industry for cruise operators".

Estrosi released a statement in response, stating he will pursue the ban in court "if the state does not take any regulatory measures within a reasonable time". *JM*

## Sabre completes sale

**SABRE** Corporation has closed the US\$1.1 billion sale of its hospitality business to American asset management company, TPG in Apr (**TD** 29 Apr).

"The completion of the sale of Sabre Hospitality Solutions to TPG is an important step in Sabre's ongoing transformation," said Kurt Ekert, President and Chief Executive of Sabre.

## Ponant pops Kimberley

**PONANT** Explorations has opened sales for its 2027 Kimberley season with exclusive early booking offers.

The program features 14 departures between May and Aug 2027 aboard the purpose-built small expedition ships *Le Jacques Cartier* and *Le Soleal*.

This will include Ponant's popular 'Australia's Iconic Kimberley' voyages, which explore the region over 10 nights.

Itineraries are designed for inquisitive travellers seeking encounters with nature, wildlife, and Indigenous culture.

Each expedition includes daily expert-led shore excursions and onboard lectures hosted by industry-leading scientists, naturalists or experts, offering access to the region's history.

Ponant is offering up to 30% bonus savings off the brochure price, in addition to a free solo supplement, which is available on five departures - details **HERE**.

## Explora milestones

**EXPLORA** Journeys has celebrated three key milestones in the construction of its luxury fleet, which is set to comprise six ships in total by 2028.

*Explora III* completed its float out, putting it on track for its 2026 debut, while a traditional coin ceremony was held for *Explora IV* and steel was cut for *Explora V* - both due in 2027.

## WA heritage site

**THE** world's largest rock art site on the Burrup Peninsula in Western Australia is now a Cultural World Heritage Site.

Murujuga is the home of more than 1 million petroglyphs, some dating back 50,000 years, and the world's oldest depiction of a human face.

Traditional custodians from the Murujuga Aboriginal Corporation and the Federal Environment Minister Murray Watt were in Paris for the decision.

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### Bali health check

**TRAVELLERS** planning a trip to Bali are being urged by the destination's medical professionals and search and rescue teams to ensure they are fit and healthy before booking their holiday.

The calls follow a recent string of emergencies among tourists in Bali, including an Australian citizen who had a seizure and fainted along the walkway from a Jetstar flight to the passenger pick-up area, sustaining a serious head and neck injury.

Local authorities said it was quickly confirmed by the man's wife that he had a medical history of hypertension.

Other recent incidents in Bali included a 40-year-old mother and her 19-year-old son who were rescued after getting lost on the island's Mount Batukaru in Tabanan Regency, as well as the recent death of a Brazilian tourist who fell from a cliff on Lombok's Mount Rinjani.

## Wipe fees, add value

**ONE** of the easiest ways for agents to prove their value to clients is by helping them to avoid unnecessary travel fees.

David Smyth, owner and Director of Forward Travel, pointed out that if customers are spending \$10,000 or more on trips, a seemingly innocuous 3% foreign transaction fee could set them back \$300, which could instead be spent on a fine-dining experience or private guides.

Advisors may suggest clients skip their everyday bank card, as most Aussie banks charge around 3% on overseas purchases, in addition to ATM fees and currency mark-ups, Smyth said.

Instead, opt for travel-friendly alternatives, particularly debit cards designed for international use, which use mid-market exchange rates, do not charge foreign transaction or withdrawal fees, and allow travellers to hold and convert multiple currencies.



Another suggestion is for clients to travel with a back-up card, just in case one is lost or there are technical issues, Smyth added.

"Many clients assume prepaid travel cards from the big banks are the safest option - but they often come with reload fees, currency markups, inactivity charges and poor client support.

"Unless clients are set on locking in rates in advance, these cards often deliver less value and more hassle," he said.

Earlier this year, Wise released The Shear Madness Index with YouGov, revealing that 78% of Aussies face hidden charges on their bank-issued credit and debit cards while travelling. *JHM*

Read more on the topic **HERE**.

### EK crypto payments

**EMIRATES** will accept cryptocurrency as a payment for airfares from the start of 2026.

The Dubai-based carrier will facilitate the move through a partnership with Singaporean digital currency trading brand Crypto.com, with payments to be made via its trading platform.

While a specific implementation date has not been confirmed, the two companies will run a joint awareness campaign initially promoting the use of cryptocurrency as a form of legitimate airfare payment.

Cryptocurrency payments made through the Emirates website will be converted to UAE dirhams via real-time exchange rates prior to tickets being issued.



## SCENIC ECLIPSE

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## Titanic II has a date

**THE** cruise project that has been on again, off again more times than Jennifer Lopez and Ben Affleck is back on, again.

Mining magnate Clive Palmer has been keen to sail a replica of the *Titanic* on the same ill-fated route from the UK to New York City for over 10 years, and now there is a date for the launch.

A statement from Palmer's company Blue Star Line has flagged Jun 2027 for *Titanic II*'s debut sailing.

"After unforeseen global delays, we have re-engaged with partners to bring the dream of *Titanic II* to life," Palmer said.



## Watch your luggage

**LOST** or damaged luggage accounts for nearly one in five insurance claims, data from nib Travel has showed.

The average cost for luggage claims last year was around \$800, with 59% of those linked to items that were either lost or stolen, and around 25% for damages.

"People often assume travel insurance is just for major medical emergencies, but lost or missing baggage can cause enormous disruption and cost," said nib Travel Strategy & Development head Matt Neat.

## Travel dominates points

**MORE** than two-in-three Aussies have cashed in on reward points in the last year, with travel one of the most popular verticals to spend them on.

New research by comparison website Finder also revealed that an average of one in 10 Aussies

are using loyalty points on flight rewards seats.

Hotel stays (8%), points plus pay for flights (9%) and flight seat upgrades (5%) rounded out the top ways Aussies redeemed their hard-earned points.

Travel took four of the top five spots in Finder's loyalty point survey, with the sector only beaten out by everyday expenses (48%) and consumer goods (10%).

Other points-heavy travel sectors included car rentals and holiday packages (both 4%).

While there are plenty of points being splashed on travel, the research showed 30% of Aussies have not redeemed any of their rewards in the past year. *MS*

## China powers down

**POWER** banks are now banned on all domestic flights in China under a new ruling by the country's Civil Aviation Authority of China (CAAC).

Now in effect, the ban applies to all models not carrying the China Compulsory Certification logo, those with unclear markings, or any recalled models.

The CAAC has also moved to tighten its guidelines regulating the carriage of potentially dangerous goods by mandating airlines strengthen passenger awareness campaigns relating to fire and smoke incidents caused by power banks.

Chinese airports will provide facilities for travellers to dispose or safely store power banks prior to boarding their aircraft.

Currently, the new CAAC ban only applies to domestic flights, with international airlines to enforce their own rules.



## Flix drives into Oz



**GLOBAL** coach operator Flix will enter the Australian market later this year, where it will launch routes along the east coast to compete with the likes of Greyhound and Murrays Coaches.

Yvan Lefranc-Morin is the new Senior Managing Director for Australia, and he will relocate from France for the role to spearhead the Aussie debut.

Flix has carried more than 500 million passengers in 44 countries since it launched in 2013, offering pax advanced tech on journeys.



## Window Seat

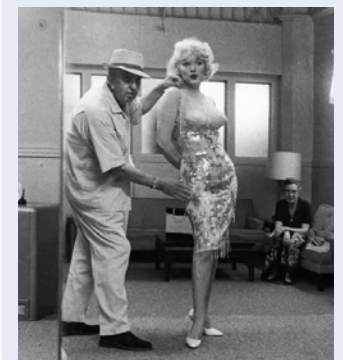
**FROM** dressing Hollywood royalty like Marilyn Monroe and Bette Davis to becoming good mates with '50s heartthrob Cary Grant, who could imagine that a boy from Kiama in NSW would become big-time costume designer?

Born on the south coast of NSW in 1897, Orry Kelly was much celebrated overseas for his Oscar-winning designs on films like *An American in Paris* and *Some Like It Hot* and his work on more than 300 films, including *Casablanca*.

But when he died in 1964, while Hollywood mourned his passing, he was still under the radar in Australia - until now.

This month, Orry's work is being showcased in his hometown in an exhibition on 26 Jul, featuring original costumes and artwork, followed by a gala dinner at The Sebel Kiama.

To book tickets, click [HERE](#).



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## Millions of trees

**MORE** than 2.5 million trees have now been planted by Flight Centre Travel Group as part of its 'Planting for the Planet' initiative in partnership with Reforest.

The program has been active for two years, introduced as part of a revamped 'Captain's Pack' value-add offering to customers (**TD** 15 Aug 2023).

Based on booking value, the pack provides customers with benefits such as luggage tracking, price drop protection and waived fees, along with a contribution to various reforestation efforts.

Since it launched, trees have now been planted in four regions - Vancouver Island, Morocco's Atlas Mountains, East Taranaki in New Zealand and Victoria's Wimmera Habitat Corridor.

"This milestone is a powerful nod to what we recognise as our responsibility to preserve and enrich the places we love [and] the impact we can make when we come together," said Flight Centre Global MD, Andrew Stark.

Reforest CEO Daniel Walsh said Flight Centre's 'Planting for the Planet' program is having a "very real and meaningful impact on landscapes and communities in several parts of the world".

## PLAZA PREMIUM SLICING FOOD WASTE

**PAY-AS-YOU-GO** airport lounge operator Plaza Premium Group (PPG) recently hosted a Zero-Waste Masterclass led by internationally acclaimed plant-based chef and zero-waste expert, Chef Vojtech Vegh.

Held at the Plaza Premium Lounge in Kuala Lumpur's low-cost airport KLIA2, the session was attended by leaders from the PPG culinary division, local chefs and airport partners.

Key learnings from the session included zero-waste cooking by using every part of an ingredient, understanding food waste and storage, and creative repurposing of leftovers.

The masterclass was part of a wider sustainability strategy across the Plaza Premium Group to make sustainable dining part of the airport experience for guests.

PPG Global Director Culinary



and Group Operations, Andreas Hoehne, said the class builds on successes already realised, with new initiatives to be introduced at lounges in other cities.

"We're now preparing to roll out the initiative to key locations like Hong Kong, Dubai, Toronto and Riyadh," Hoehne said.

Part of the success comes from wider adoption of Winnow,

an innovative application that measures food waste and compares against volumes ordered to find new efficiencies and reductions in stock ordering.

PPG said it is now working to transform its airport kitchens into more efficient, environmentally responsible operations globally.

Hoehne is **pictured** above right with Chef Vojtech Vegh. *ML*

## Copenhagen rewarding clean living

**COPENHAGEN** has expanded a city-wide clean living incentive program designed to reward visitors who arrive by train and engage in clean, green activities.

The 'Copenpay' program offers travellers who walk, ride a bike, catch public transport or pick up rubbish with rewards such as free guided city tours and discounted attractions.

New perks now added to the scheme include free yoga

classes and free bike rentals.

"Rather than bringing more tourists to the city, the goal with CopenPay is to nudge our visitors and raise their awareness about travelling in a more sustainable way - exploring Copenhagen more responsibly while being rewarded with unique experiences," commented Wonderful Copenhagen CEO, Soren Tegen Pedersen.

## New AMSL chief

**HYDROGEN** electric powered vertical take-off company AMSL Aero has hired Dr Adriano Di Pietro as its new Chief Executive.

Di Pietro will now lead the company and its aircraft into its key certification phases.

He joins from his prior role as CEO of the Australian Air Mobility Cooperative Research Centre at Swinburne University in Vic.

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## MONEY

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

**AU\$1 = US\$0.654**

**THE** Aussie dollar is enjoying a rare moment near year-highs against the US dollar, reaching 66 cents before settling at 65 cents, making now an ideal time to lock in travel plans.

While Australians are increasingly favouring regional travel, where the AUD holds more value, Southeast Asia remains a standout for value.

Destinations like Vietnam, Bali, Thailand and Indonesia continue to offer a strong bang-for-buck thanks to favourable exchange rates and low costs.

Vietnam bookings, for example, surged 250% for hotels and 170% for activities from Mar to Jun, according to data from Klook.

Travel Money Oz told *news.com.au* that the AUD's steady appreciation against the Vietnamese dong is boosting the destination's popularity.

"This translates directly to your holiday budget, with an average meal or a taxi ride costing around just A\$5."

*Wholesale rates this morning.*

US	\$0.654
UK	£0.487
NZ	\$1.096
Euro	€0.561
Japan	¥96.72
Thailand	฿21.25
China	¥4.689
South Africa	11.72
Canada	\$0.897
Crude oil	US\$67.64

## A decade of partnership

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**ADVENTURE** World, National Geographic-Lindblad Expeditions and the Australian Museum are this month celebrating 10 years of partnership.

During an event last week, Lesa Bain, Vice President, National & Strategic Accounts at National Geographic-Lindblad Expeditions, shared updates from the brand, and said, "Our travellers are continuous learners who yearn for enrichment, so our choice of strategic partners must complement our ethos of ethical and authentic experiences."

The three brands have worked together on major exhibitions, 'Sharks' and 'Machu Picchu and the Gold of the Incas'.

"This strategic alliance deeply resonates with 'Experiential Explorers' - individuals seeking personal growth, cultural engagement, and a profound connection with the natural world," said Adventure World MD Neil Rodgers. *JHM*

**Pictured:** Rodgers; Bain; Kim McKay AO, Director & CEO, Australian Museum; and Dr Greta Frankham, Australian Museum Research Institute.

## JB up for accolade

**JOURNEY** Beyond has been shortlisted for the Travel Marketing Team of the Year accolade at the 2025 Mumbrella Travel Marketing Awards.

"This recognition is a testament to the dedicated efforts of our marketing team, which plays a vital role in bringing our brands' stories to life," the tourism company shared on LinkedIn.

"Our high-performing marketing team, comprising 22 members based in Adelaide with additional team members across Australia, thrives on strong collaboration and a competitive spirit within the industry, all fuelled by a shared passion for travel."

The annual Mumbrella award ceremony will take place on 28 Aug at the Crown in Sydney, after the Travel Marketing Summit.



## Wales ticks tourist tax

**WALES** is set to introduce a tourist tax from 2027, which will see visitors pay £1.30 (A\$2.67) per night for various types of accommodations.

If visitors are camping or staying in a hostel, councils will only be able to charge 75 pence (A\$1.54) per person, per night.

The new law was passed by the Welsh Parliament on Tue.

## Yas adds new rides



**ABU** Dhabi's Yas Waterworld is set to expand, with 20 new attractions to be developed, the park's management has revealed.

New rides will include a twisting water slide aimed at kids and teens, a closed aqua-tube slide, a dueling raft racing tube duo, and a splash zone for smaller children.

The new offerings will form part of a new 'Lost City' zone, which will also feature recently added experiences and dining options.

"The expansion of Yas Waterworld Yas Island, Abu Dhabi represents another bold step in our mission to deliver exceptional, world-leading and joyful experiences on Yas Island," said Miral Chief Executive Officer, Mohamed Abdalla Al Zaabi.

"These new rides not only transform water-based entertainment in the region but also reflect our ongoing commitment to creating innovative destinations that captivate visitors of all ages."





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