Travel Daily First with the news

Monday 21st July 2025

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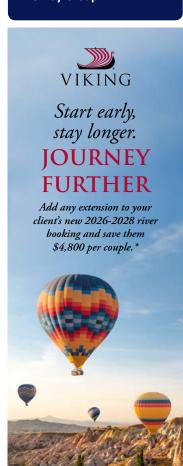




Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today features seven pages of the latest travel industry news, as well as full pages from:

- Viva Holidays
- Tourism NT
- G'Day Group



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Cameron joins Spencer

XCLUSIVE

FORMER Helloworld executive Kate Cameron has been tapped by Spencer Travel Holdings to operate and boost its independent contractor model (TD breaking news).

In her new role as Head of Spencer Affiliates, Cameron (pictured) will run the company's existing affiliates and be charged with further growing the model.

She most recently served as Head of Agency Partnerships at

Virginia is for lovers

EXPLORE the surprising diversity of Virginia, from Bristol's country music roots to the Civil War battlegrounds - see p8.

NT trip for agents

JOIN Northern Territory Tourism's live webinar on what the Red Centre has to offer for your chance to win - see p9.



Helloworld in a second stint for the company, a position she held since Aug 2024 (TD 12 Aug 2024) after a hiatus from travel working in the information security space.

The latest development is the second big announcement from Spencer Travel in less than a week, with the company making the call to sell its corporate division (TD 17 Jul).

MEANWHILE, Jordan Carpenter has been promoted to Trade Partnerships Manager at Helloworld, where she will oversee relationships with tourism boards. AB

NTIA voting open

VOTING for the NTIAs is now open and will run until 5pm AEST

The top five companies in each category will be announced as finalists in mid-Aug.

Click **HERE** to vote for your favourite brands.









Mint pledges low impact

RESPONDING to an RBA proposal last week to scrap credit card surcharges (TD 16 Jul), Mint Payments believes it has the solutions and new initiatives coming to minimise the impact of changes on travel businesses.

"While this is a major shift for travel, we see it as an opportunity to modernise payments and support our customers through the transition," the Australian fintech company said.

"With the removal of surcharges, we believe this is the moment to reframe payments as a strategic lever for merchant differentiation and consumer trust, so payments [aren't] just seen as a commodity."

A vote for G'Day

G'DAY Group is up for Most Popular Accommodation Group/ Chain at the NTIAs this year - see page 10 for more details.



Mint Payments added it is currently working alongside its partners to integrate modern, cost-effective payment standards, such as PayID and PayTo, into travel booking flows for supplier payments and on the acceptance side of transactions.

If the RBA suggestions are formally adopted, the company has pledged to pass on 100% of wholesale fee reductions.

"RBA's reforms include a reduction and cap on interchange and scheme fees.

"As these are capped and reduced, Mint will proactively pass on those savings once they become available to us after 01 Jul 2026." Mint noted. AB



Students hit by fee

AUSTRALIANS wishing to travel to the United States to study will be hit with the new US\$250 (A\$380) 'visa integrity fee', part of President Donald Trump's 'One Big Beautiful Bill'.

While Aussies travelling to the US for less than 90 days on the ESTA will be exempt, student visas F-1 and F-2 will be slugged with the new entry tax.

The US Govt said travellers who have paid the fee may be eligible for reimbursement if they do not breach their visa conditions.

While the latest levy has been approved, no date of implementation has been announced by government, but is likely before the end of the year.



ChatGPT Agent here

CHATGPT'S much-hyped AI Agent functionality has now rolled out in Australia.

Flagged by *Travel Daily* in Jan (TD 28 Jan), the new tech allows users of the OpenAI app to give it specific agent tasks, such as comparing the prices and booking tours, hotels, and flights.

Responding to concerns about possible financial mishaps from its Al agents, ChatGPT said the app will always request permission before taking actions of consequence like payment, and can be easily paused by human intervention to stop assigned tasks at any point.

The functionality is currently only available for Pro, Plus, and Team users, which can be accessed through the tools dropdown menu from the composer by selecting 'agent mode'.

A recent PassportCard study suggested Aussies still favour human advisors despite the rise in AI capabilities (TD 08 Jul).







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Burgdorf to help AW expand

EXCLUSIVE

NEW Adventure World (AW) Head of Product Anna Burgdorf believes the company has the scope to expand without sliding into "mass-market" territory.

Burgdorf, who took up the position at Adventure World last month (TD 30 Jun), told Travel **Daily** the retail experience gained in her years with Flight Centre's luxury division will help her to drive product growth at AW.

"There's no goal to be massmarket, but there is absolutely a willingness and a requirement for growth," she enthused.

"The business wants to scale, and so looking at new opportunities in areas that we don't currently service is a good opportunity for us, that's a good chance for growth."

Burgdorf said new destinations, particularly those which have only recently reopened after the pandemic, could come into view.

"I think we'll continue to look for things that are different," added Burgdorf (pictured).

"What's important for us is to stay true to what the



Adventure World philosophy is, understanding what that brand experience is, making sure that we are connecting with the right client through our trade partners," she added. MS

BCD Oversee Al

BCD Travel and traveltech business Oversee have announced the expansion of their partnership after a successful pilot period.

Oversee specialises in spend optimisation and agent operations using Al-powered technology and will now implement this across BCD's operational environment to automate repetitive tasks such as booking requests, exchanges and shell PNR creation.

BCD said the partnership has improved agent workflows and increased service-level agreement adherence across pilot markets.



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Tourists to pay more

TRAVELLERS in Bangkok will soon pay more for public transport than locals under a new government plan approved late last week

In a bid to incentivise more citizens to use trains to ease the traffic burden and achieve greener outcomes, the Thailand Government has capped fares to 20 baht (A\$0.95) from 01 Oct.

However, tourists do not qualify for the change, which will apply to 194 stations across the city.

Capella goes bush

CAPELLA Ubud in Bali has opened an exclusive new twobedroom 'glamping' style tent accommodation category aimed at families and small groups.

The Lodge features two bedrooms, indoor and outdoor living areas, as well as a heated outdoor swimming pool.

Guests will be transferred to the property by helicopter.

BESydney targets India

A QUADRUPLING of direct flight capacity between India and Sydney since 2019 has inspired Business Events Sydney to appoint a local representative in the subcontinental country.

To be based in the Destination NSW office in Mumbai, Devanshi Parikh (pictured) will work closely with MICE travel partners to highlight new market developments in Sydney.

In time, her role will evolve to incorporate leisure initiatives led by Destination NSW to capitalise on shared partner opportunities.

Parikh is a graduate of The International School for Tourism in Zurich and joins BESydney after running her own boutique travel agency for the past eight years.

"India is a top three source market for international incentives choosing Sydney, with the number of business events delegates travelling to Sydney from India growing by more than



50% since 2019 - proving Sydney's appeal to the most discerning travellers," said BESydney Chief Executive Officer, Amanda Lampe.

"Devanshi's on-the-ground expertise and market knowledge will be instrumental in responding to our growing Indian client base and expanding our reach and impact," she added.

Parikh said a key initial focus will be tapping into India's love for sport in Sydney, heralded by the upcoming cricket tour of Australia by India this summer. ML



WHAT is more frustrating than your flight returning to its departure point?

Your flight returning to its departure point twice.

That was the story for unlucky passengers on Hawaiian Airlines HA1 from Los Angeles to Honolulu on Sat, after the flight had to return to LAX after one hour and 21 minutes for a medical issue.

Paramedics met the Boeing 787-9 on the tarmac when it returned and attended to the sick passenger while the aircraft refuelled.

HA1 then had a second attempt, but was forced to return to LAX after just 37 minutes, this time when a mechanical issue popped up.

Passengers finally completed the flight on Sun.





Traveloka launches in Oz

LOCAL travel agents,

wholesalers and tour operators are being invited to diversify their inventory and boost client service delivery following the launch of Traveloka in Australia last week.

Already a leading platform in Southeast Asia, Traveloka says it is an "all-in-one" platform for flights, accommodation, airport transfers, car rentals and indestination experiences.

The local launch of Traveloka follows new research showing 42% of Australian travellers encountered stress on a recent holiday due to flight changes, and issues with local connectivity or accommodation.

EK boosts Ireland

EMIRATES will increase service between Dubai and Ireland from two to three daily services on 26 Oct, with the extra service to be operated by a B777-300ER.



Traveloka co-founder Albert Albert said the company addresses these issues through its local supply networks.

"We are looking forward to working closely with Australia's travel industry, providing the travel industry with a reliable platform that enhances operational efficiency, simplifies complex itineraries, and helps deliver exceptional service to their clients," Albert said.

"We are not just here to serve travellers, we are here to enable the industry, and we look forward to building strong trade relationships in Australia."

The company said it is open to API integrations with B2B partners and regional campaigns with local tourist boards. ML



Discover our River Cruise Special Report

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ETIAS to be hiked?

IN A move designed to address rising operational costs, the European Commission has proposed to hike the European Travel Information and Authorisation System (ETIAS) fee from €7 (A\$12.50) to €20 (A\$36).

The hike means visitors from visa-exempt countries may pay nearly triple the current cost to enter the European Union from late next year.

The fee, which was originally set to be introduced at the end of this year, will help pay for new technical features, ongoing maintenance, and staffing.

It will apply to non-EU nationals from visa-free countries such as Australia, and is payable before boarding a plane, ferry, or bus to any Schengen-zone country (TD 04 Apr).

The United Kingdom Government is also planning to raise the cost of its own recently introduced Electronic Travel Authorisation (TD 20 Jan).

TFE goes to the UK

AUSTRALIAN hotel group TFE Hotels will open its first properties in the UK, with Adinabranded apartment-hotels, The Hobson Cambridge by Adina and The Wellington Glasgow by Adina, set to open later in the year.

Adina is well established in Europe already, with apartmenthotels in Germany, Austria, Denmark, Switzerland and Hungary, while it also has locations in Singapore and NZ.

The Hobson is located in a historic former police station in the middle of Cambidge, while The Wellington is located off George Square in central Glasgow, close to the city's conference and entertainment hubs.







Taylor says Aloha Hawaii



HELLOWORLD Glendale travel advisor Lydia Taylor (pictured) is the skilled winner of the Viva Holidays Hawaii incentive prize.

Together with partners Aqua-Aston Hospitality and Hawaiian Airlines, Viva Holidays presented Taylor with a six-night, self-hosted famil to Maui and Waikiki for herself and a companion.

Taylor took out the top prize by earning points booking a combination of Hawaiian Airlines long-haul flights through Air Tickets and Express Tickets; and accommodation with Aqua-Aston properties with Viva Holidays and ReadyRooms.

Her prize includes return economy airfares plus inter-island flights, three nights at Ilikai Hotel & Luxury Suites, and three nights at Aston Kaanapali Shores.

"I am extremely excited to have won such an amazing experience," Taylor enthused.

Holidays, Aqua-Aston Hospitality and Hawaiian Airlines for such an incredible prize," she said, adding it will mark her first time travelling to the US island state.

Millie Browne, Trade Director for Linkd Tourism, said it was "rewarding" to see how excited Taylor was by her win. DF

Barcelona cuts cruise

SPAIN'S third-largest port has announced it will cut the number of terminals used by cruise lines from seven to five.

Barcelona authorities have been vocal about overtourism, recently banning all short-term rentals by 2029 (TD 22 May).

In the latest move, the city's council has acted to slow the significant growth in cruise passengers, which rose by 20% from 2018 to 2024.

Reforms will start next year and

"A huge thank you to Viva a new terminal will also be built. MOST OUTSTANDING Summer 2026 TOUR OPERATOR **SPECIALISED Early Bird Deal MUST END! DISCOVER MORE** Book by July 31, 2025 **ALBATROSS**

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Travel Daily **FEATURE**

Experience MORE of Asia with NCL:

Director of Guest Services, Camila Inwood, Shares NCL's Top Tips



This week, Norwegian Cruise Line's virtual agent incentive heads to **Asia**—one of the most exciting and in-demand regions. From Japan's cherry blossoms to Vietnam's vibrant cities and the Philippines' laidback islands, Asia is made to be explored

"Asia is incredibly diverse, and cruising is the best way to explore multiple countries in one seamless journey – at incredible value," says **Camilla Inwood**, NCL's Director of Guest Services. "I'm especially excited to experience it myself aboard Norwegian Spiritlater this year. Our team has shared their tips to help guests make the most of their journey.'

Why Cruise Asia with NCL? With 40 immersive itineraries through 2027, NCL offers more ways to explore Asia. Guésts can sail from seven iconic cities—Tokyo, Singapore, Bangkok and more—aboard three smaller, contemporary ships— Norwegian Spirit®, Norwegian Sun® and Norwegian Jade® designed for a more intimate, destination-rich experience. Think lesser-known gems like Puerto Princesa, Akita, and Sihanoukville

Tips from NCL's Experts

- Dallas Baker, Senior Social Media Specialist: "Okinawa's beaches are stunning and traversing Shibuya Crossing was a bucket-list moment. Don't miss the purple sweet potato snacks!"
- Melissa Neouchi, Guest Services: "Swimming in Boracay's crystal waters and enjoying the local food was a highlight - a tropical paradise."
- Keiko Shimizu, Guest Services

Representative: "Asia has it all -gardens, hot springs, and incredible food across multiple countries.

Top 5 Reasons to Cruise Asia with NCL:

1.3 Smaller ships for deeper, more immersive exploration

2.7 convenient departure ports across Asia

.40 itineraries from 9-19 days—available through 2027

4. Unrivalled choice—open-jaw, round-trip, and back-to-back options

5.A perfect blend of culture, modern cities and nature including Japan's 2027 cherry blossom season

Highlight Ports Include:

- Boracay, Philippines—laid-back beaches and local cuisine
- Nagasaki & Okinawa, Japan—rich history and natural
- Shimizu, Japan—scenic views of Mount Fuji from Miho-no-Matsubara, a UNESCO World Heritage
- Bangkok, Thailand, Tokyo & Yokohama—overnight stays for nightlife, local cuisine and markets

Underrated Gem:

• Taiwan -buzzing night markets and unbeatable street food

Perfect for:

• Foodies & couples seeking soft adventure and cultural

Complete this week's **Asia Quiz** to earn your virtual passport stamp. Collect all stamps for a chance to win one of two 2026 cruises—near or far! T&Cs apply.



NORWEGIAN CRUISE LINE



BROCHURES



Bunnik Tours - UK, Ireland & Europe 2026 Bunnik Tours has officially launched its Europe, UK & Ireland 2026 brochure - the first to showcase the brand's refreshed look and its most expansive Europe offering to date. The publication features almost double the pages of last year's edition, with more tours and departures than ever before. The cleaner layout includes summaries of each tour's top sights to help travellers and agents find the perfect itinerary faster. Readers will learn about 30 unique trips across the region, from classic tours like 'Northern Italy', 'Jewels of Dalmatia'

and 'Alpine Discovery' to flexible short tours including 'Discover Iceland' and 'A Tale of Two Irelands'. See the digital brochure HERE.



Wendy Wu Tours - Japan 2026/27

Showcasing a bold new design and layout, Wendy Wu Tours has launched its latest Japan brochure. Within its pages, readers will find details on the operator's immersive new tours, including the brand-new 'Hidden Japan: Spirit of Kysuhu', designed for those wanting to venture beyond the typical 'Golden Route' of Tokyo, Kyoto and Osaka. For the first time, all Japan tours are listed by duration rather than style, placing Classic and Go Beyond itineraries side-by-side for easier comparison.

The refreshed brochure highlights the most popular seasonal departures - read the publication online HERE.



Collette - African Safari 2025/26

Collette has unveiled its new Africa brochure, headlined by a helpful 'Introductory Tips' section to guide travellers on wildlife viewing, best timing to visit and must-see destinations. Billed as 'the ultimate African expedition', a 23-day Cape Town to Cairo tour is also detailed in the brochure and includes cosmopolitan cityscapes, game drives in the iconic Kruger National Park, a visit to the iconic Victoria Falls and a giraffe sanctuary in Kenya before crossing into Egypt for a cruise

down the Nile from Luxor to Aswan. The guide can be downloaded as a digital copy HERE.



Carnival's key to success



CARNIVAL Cruise Line has officially opened Celebration Key in Grand Bahama, boasting the ability to host up to 5,000 guests.

The US\$600 million destination has five areas that passengers can explore: Paradise Plaza; Starfish Lagoon; Calypso Lagoon; Pearl Cove Bech Club; & Lokono Cove.

Celebration Key offers a range of pools for all ages, sports courts, slides and shops, including over 30 food and beverage outlets.

These include the Captain's Gallev Food Hall, Gill's Grill Seafood, and Pearl Cove Restaurant, all serving guests a variety of cuisines.

For those adults wanting some kid-free time, Calypso Lagoon is labelled as "adult-friendly",

Ha Long tragedy

AT LEAST 35 people have died in Ha Long Bay, Vietnam, after a tourist boat sunk in bad weather over the weekend

Wonder Seas was carrying 53 passengers, all from Vietnam, with many still missing.

A UNESCO World Heritage site, Ha Long Bay is one of Vietnam's most popular tourist spots.

while Pearl Cove Beach Club is an adults-only area.

Travel Daily

Carnival Cruise Line President Christine Duffy said, "Celebration Key is more than just a beautiful place; it is a celebration of the Bahamian paradise our guests love, complemented by an impressive variety of incredible new experiences and offerings".

Celebration Key will initially bring over two million guests per year to Grand Bahama. DF

Art of the riverside

RIVERSIDE Luxury Cruises has launched a number of new itineraries along the Danube River for art enthusiasts.

The sailings, which range from three to seven nights, will take place on board Riverside Mozart and visit cities like Vienna, Budapest and Bratislava and others known for their art scenes.

Guests will also enjoy access to a range of museums including an after-hours visit to Belvedere Palace in Vienna, where Gustav Klimt's The Kiss is housed.

Riverside is making a major local push, appointing Susie Coughlin as its chief rep (TD 10 Feb).

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We've been nominated

for Most Popular Accommodation Group/Chain (category 26) and it would mean so much to the G'day Group Team to have your vote.

Thank you to everyone who continues to choose us as their 'go-to' for iconic locations, memorable moments and authentically Australian experiences.









