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Vietjet survives freeze

LOW-COST carrier Vietjet has survived a call to have its global assets frozen, after a UK court overnight rejected the request by a disgruntled lessor chasing millions of dollars in alleged unpaid debts.

The Vietnamese carrier, which has plans to expand its reach



further in Australia, has been embroiled in a legal tussle with FitzWalter Capital subsidiary FW Aviation for several years over outstanding lease fees.

However, the threat of having its global network frozen was only recently put before the courts, culminating in a relieving legal victory for Vietjet yesterday.

But the budget carrier is not out of the financial woods, with a UK judge in Apr ruling that it owed FW Aviation US\$181.8 million (A\$275 million), with Vietjet appealing against the stated full figure owed.

TD reached out to Vietjet for comment, but had no response by the time of publishing. **AB**

BBOTR gains lift

THE upcoming Beyond Borders on the Road (BBOTR) events have been given extra lift with two senior aviation executives signing on to speak.

Head of Aviation Business Development and Commercial at Adelaide Airport Jonathan Cheong and Chief Commercial and Aviation Officer at Perth Airport Kate Holsgrove will deliver insights on state developments.

They will add extra weight to the aviation intelligence that will also be relayed by Cathay Pacific, which will deliver a presentation about its increased services out of Adelaide and Perth, and offer insights on how to leverage these new services with clients.

Cathay Pacific and the Hong Kong Tourism Board have both also signed on as major sponsors.

Eeger for more jobs

AFTER a long build up, the Federal Govt and Accommodation Australia have pushed play on their tourism and travel jobs and training platform.

Eeger was flagged last year (**TD** 10 Dec 2024) as a new way to connect jobseekers, employers, and educators with job opportunities, and alleviate the staff challenges still being endured in travel and tourism.

The platform was made possible via a \$10 million grant from the Federal Government.

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Travel Daily today features seven pages of the latest news, including our **Corporate Update**, plus full pages from:

- G'Day Group
- Travel to Italy Academy



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ADELAIDE

Today's issue of **TD** is coming to you courtesy of MTA, which is hosting its 2025 annual national conference.

KEY speakers will grace the stage today at the MTA National Conference at Adelaide's Convention Centre, with Olympian Grant Hackett and Glow London's Emma Harris addressing delegates.

Heavy rain last night and this morning is unlikely to dampen the mood as attendees depart for activities after the first key sessions, including sushi making, wine tours and city sightseeing.

New MTA members will be able to attend casual drinks in the evening.

Win a wellness stay

CHIVA-SOM Hua Hin has launched a new trade incentive, offering agents who book a client stay by the end of the month with an entry into the draw to win a three-night wellness escape.

The competition is open to travel advisors who book a client into a wellness retreat of five nights or more.

Complimentary round-trip transfers from Bangkok to Hua Hin are also included - call Travel The World on 1300 857 037.

JB dives deep with buy

JOURNEY Beyond has continued its acquisitive appetite this week, announcing the purchase of the key WA marine tourist attraction, Exmouth Dive & Whalesharks Ningaloo (EDWN) (**TD** breaking news).

The acquisition will bolster the success of Journey Beyond's nearby Sal Salis Ningaloo accommodation asset in WA, with the company already enjoying an established partnership with EDWN, which has seen guests staying at the luxury lodges combine marine tours.

"This marks an exciting expansion for Journey Beyond in Western Australia and allows the group to further expand our offerings of immersive, authentic and uniquely Australian experiences," Journey Beyond CEO Chris Tallent said.

Once regulatory approvals are obtained, EDWN will operate within Journey Beyond's Marine Division under the guidance of General Manager Niko Peranovic. "We look forward to



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collaborating with the team to continue to enhance visitation to Exmouth and the overall unparalleled experience that connects them with the natural beauty of Ningaloo," she said.

EDWN offers travellers an array of marine experiences, including guided swims with whale sharks and humpback whales.

The latest development follows strong efforts by Journey Beyond to offer deeper explorations of the country, most recently inking a management deal to offer its guests stays at the Monarto Safari Resort (**TD** 23 Jan).

Journey Beyond bought Vintage Rail Journeys last year (**TD** 07 Jun 2024), and is also rumoured to be in the hunt to buy Ayers Rock Resort (**TD** 13 Nov 2024). **AB**

TTC's big release

SIXTEEN new itineraries for 2026 across Trafalgar, Insight Vacations and Luxury Gold have been released, in what parent company TTC Tour Brands has described as its biggest expansion in seven years.

The new trips span across five continents, including Trafalgar's itineraries in Spain, Romania and South Korea, in addition to Insight Vacations' small group tours such as the 'Adriatic Escape' and 'Wonders of Sri Lanka'.

Meanwhile, Luxury Gold has released 'Spectacular Scotland' and 'Ultimate Portugal'.

DFAT urgent warning

DFAT is advising to reconsider travelling to the Buriram, Sisaket, Surin and Ubon Ratchathani provinces in Thailand, and the provinces of Preah Vihear and Oddar Meanchey in Cambodia, due to heightened armed conflict.

New Farm bought

WANDER Beyond has acquired fellow Queensland-based travel agency New Farm Travel, strengthening its presence within the Sunshine State.

The acquisition sees the Brisbane-based agency join Wander Beyond's existing agency network of three Qld locations.

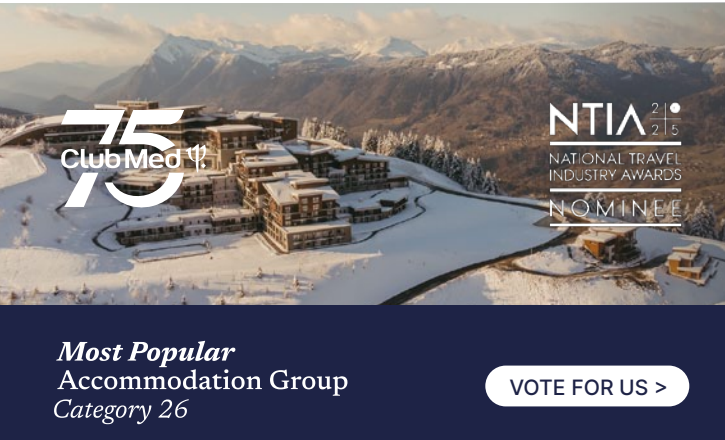


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AAT Kings explores more



AAT Kings has launched its 2026/27 program, which includes an expanded small group tour collection, as well as new 'Make Travel Matter' experiences.

Highlights of the latest collection include an overnight cruise on New Zealand's *Milford Mariner*, allowing passengers to sleep beneath Fiordland stars and kayak past thundering waterfalls.

Also expected to be popular is the Urlar Vineyard tasting in Wairarapa, offering up organic wines and a seasonal platter.

New closer-to-home options include a Kangaroo Island wool tour, visiting Australia's only vertical wool mill.

Travellers can also partake in a bushtucker tasting with chef Rayleen Brown in Alice Springs, and a Karrke Aboriginal cultural experience in Watarrka. *MS*

QF spices MU deal

QANTAS is seeking to expand its codeshare deal with China Eastern Airlines to include services between Australia and Chile.

Under the proposed extension, China Eastern will codeshare on daily Qantas-operated services between Sydney and Santiago from 26 Oct, enabling the Chinese carrier to independently market and price flights between China and Chile via Australia.

In its submission, Qantas also intends to provide China Eastern with access to its inventory without requiring real-time confirmation or booking approval for each seat sold.

Qantas and China Eastern already codeshare on several direct flights to the Asian carrier's hub in Shanghai, as well as a range of services to various Chinese cities via Singapore.

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AVIATION WEEK

Turnbull joins Nammos

FORMER Tourism WA chief Carolyn Turnbull (**pictured**) has relocated to the UAE to take up a role as CEO of the growing Nammos Hotels & Resorts brand.

In her new role, Turnbull will be charged with transitioning the business from a beach lifestyle-focused portfolio into a major ultra-luxury hotel network.

The company already has an impressive pipeline of properties coming online over the next few years, including Nammos Resort Amaala located within Saudi Arabia's Red Sea Global project, due to open later this year.

Other properties scheduled to join Nammos' portfolio of six resorts soon are Nammos Resort Maldives and Nammos Resort



Abu Dhabi, with extra locations across Europe, the Middle East, and Asia also planned.

"My vision is to further elevate the brand by creating experiences that celebrate culture, people, and place, designed to inspire joy and connection," Turnbull said.

Existing Nammos resorts are located in Greece, France, Cyprus, the UAE, and Sardinia.

Nammos is backed by Admo Lifestyle Holding, a joint-venture between Monterock International and Alpha Dhabi Holding. *AB*

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Minor goes Pro for agents

MINOR Hotels has consolidated the booking process and resources for its 560 properties into a new platform designed for B2B clients, including agents.

Known as Minor Pro, the new global offering brings together rates, booking tools and inventory channels for the entire network into one system for sellers.

In addition to agents, Minor Pro is aimed at event organisers, tour operators, corporate account managers and other businesses booking the Minor range, which includes Anantara, Avani, Elewana Collection, Oaks, NH Hotels, NH Collection and Tivoli.

Central to Minor Pro is a new

website - [CLICK HERE](#) - which features intuitive navigation and content for each brand, property and supporting services.

Meetings and group bookings can also be made on the new platform via a real-time engine, with exclusive rates and tailored commissions available for clients.

The company has also committed to rolling out new plans and systems for different professional groups.

A dedicated Minor Pro page on LinkedIn has now been launched to share inspiration, updates and industry insights.

Minor Hotels Australasia Head of Commercial, Daniel Csorban, said Minor Pro marks an exciting shift in how the company connects with professional partners.

"It is more than a name change, it is part of a unified global strategy to deliver smarter tools... and a seamless experience for agencies & event organisers." *ML*

EVT likes it snug

EVT Hotels & Resorts has introduced new room experiences under its midscale Atura brand - Snuggy, Snuggy Plus, and Family.

The three types are now available at Atura Adelaide Airport across 28 newly added rooms, with the most affordable option being Snuggy.

At 12m², the room type features a cabin-like design with essential amenities and a king-sized bed, ideal for overnight stays for travellers on a budget.

Snuggy Plus takes things up a notch at 18m², with guests now offered a TV and two-seater lounge chair, while the family option offers 40m² of space with a king-sized bed and bunkbeds.

ATIA cancels three

THREE travel businesses have had their ATIA accreditation cancelled after failing to satisfy the association of critical details relating to its annual renewal.

The latest businesses no longer accredited as of 22 Jul include The Australian Educational Travel Company, Butler by the Sea, and Atlas Travel Service.

The latest crop takes the total removed from ATIA accreditation so far this financial year to 18.

Celestyal cruises into F1



CELESTYAL has unveiled a special itinerary that merges cruising with race-car driving, giving travellers the chance to attend the 2025 Abu Dhabi Grand Prix and hear from former F1 star David Coulthard (**pictured inset**).

The 'Desert Days & Abu Dhabi Grand Prix' sailing will be offered aboard *Celestyal Journey*, kicking off the 1,260-guest ship's second season in the Arabian Gulf.

In addition to tickets to watch the action, guests can also rub shoulders with Coulthard, who will join the cruise as a guest speaker to discuss the race weekend, alongside sports broadcaster and commentator, Laura Winter.

There are two departure options, including a seven-night 'sail & stay' starting 04 Dec, featuring two nights in a four-star hotel in Abu Dhabi and tickets to the first and second practice sessions, qualifying and race day, followed by a five-night cruise.

Alternatively, guests can opt for a five-night sail option departing



06 Dec, which includes tickets to the third practice session, qualifying and race day.

The cruise will call into Dubai (overnight) and Sir Bani Yas Island.

Lee Haslett, Chief Commercial Officer at Celestyal, described the new itinerary as "the ideal curtain raiser to our Arabian Gulf season, and perfect for guests who crave adventure and cultural immersion - all provided at out-of-this-world value".

All fares include scheduled track transfers, a cocktail reception on embarkation day, a private beachside party at Sir Bani Yas Island, all meals, soft drinks, wi-fi, port fees, and gratuities. *JM*

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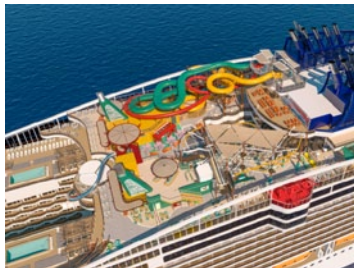
MSC ups fun factor

MSC Cruises' newest ship *MSC World Asia* is set to debut a brand-new entertainment venue, The Clubhouse, when she begins sailing in Dec 2026.

The family-friendly, retro-inspired space will offer classic table games, a Lego zone, bumper cars, basketball, and roller skating, as well as evening entertainment for guests both young and old.

MSC World Asia is also bringing back the brand's popular Luna Park venue, now with a new-look bar, as well as The Harbour, a huge outdoor park now sporting an elegant Asian-inspired redesign.

The third ship in the line's World Class series will offer seven-night itineraries to Spain, France, Rome, Italy and Malta, with accessible embarkation in every port, during winter 2026/27.



Enjoying the best of Dalmatia



AN EIGHT-DAY cruise from Dubrovnik to Split on board the *MS Suzana* allowed this group of 10 Aussie agents a first-hand look at one of Beyond Travel's most popular European itineraries.

The 'Best of Dalmatia' small-ship experience showcased the company's access to stylish ships, operational nous and access to immersive coastal exploration.

Helloworld Surrey Hills agent Jordan McGregor said the ship was both beautiful and comfortable to cruise aboard, adding he loved the whole small-ship experience.

"With a maximum capacity

of just 40 passengers and with three spacious decks to relax on and take in the stunning scenery, the ship never felt crowded," McGregor added.

Islands visited during the trip included Korcula and Hvar, which Kate Iles from Where 2 Travel Malvern said were packed with history, charm and vibrant summer energy.

"Each destination offered something unique, and I truly believe this cruise would suit travellers of all ages," Iles said.

The group was hosted on the trip by Beyond Travel Business Development Manager Sue Glatz, with the company's newest BDM recruit Matt Symonds (**TD 03 Jun**) left at home. **ML**



Window Seat

POLICE in India have detained a man accused of operating a fake embassy from a rented residential building near Delhi.

Authorities seized four cars with bogus diplomatic plates (**pictured**) from 47-year-old Harshvardhan Jain, who posed as an ambassador.

Nearly 4.5 million Indian rupees (A\$77,000) and other foreign currencies in cash were recovered from Jain's rented premises near the capital, which was adorned with flags of several countries.

According to senior police officer Sushil Ghule of Uttar Pradesh state's special taskforce, the suspect allegedly extracted money from people with the promise of overseas employment.

Jain is also suspected of money laundering through shell companies abroad, and faces charges of forgery, impersonation and possessing fake documents.



Ready to runway

LONDON Heathrow bosses will submit its detailed proposal for a third runway to the United Kingdom Government by the end of Jul, local sources have claimed.

The latest steps comes on the back of LHR welcoming 39.9 million travellers in the first six months of 2025, and revealing it is on track to hit 84 million by the end of the year.

Proposals for a third runway have already received preliminary government backing (**TD 31 Jan**), with early estimates showing a new strip could be operational by 2035, allowing flight movement caps to be raised from 480,000 to 720,000 per year.

VR pilot training

FOR the first time, pilots are being trained using virtual reality without an instructor and the use of traditional devices, according to Lufthansa Group, which is testing the technology across Brussels Airlines.

The aviation giant collaborated with Airbus to develop the software, which is helping to train pilots who operate A320 planes.

"VR offers a significantly more realistic and intense training experience," explained Captain Gauthier Lesceu, Brussels Airlines' chief theoretical knowledge instructor.

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CORPORATE UPDATE

TM corporate specialist

TRAVELMANAGERS is honing in on the corporate travel market with the appointment of MaryLuz Escandor (**pictured**) to the newly created role of Corporate Operations Executive.

Escandor will draw on 14 years of travel industry experience to provide tailored support to personal travel managers (PTMs) and their business clients.

She has worked across multiple sectors, including airline and cruise, for major names like Helloworld Travel Limited and Travel the World.

Executive GM Michael Gazal said Escandor's initial focus will be on building a solid foundation for TravelManagers to achieve long-term growth in the corporate space, including fostering connections with key airline and hotel suppliers.

Gazal added that she will also be "working closely with our PTMs to provide the tools, support and



confidence they need to grow and manage their corporate business".

Speaking about her new role, Escandor said: "After years of working in leisure travel, I am enjoying the fresh perspective and focus that the world of corporate travel offers." *JM*

A top Dawes choice

TRAVEL buying group CT Partners has welcomed Gray Dawes Travel as its newest member, following the UK-based company's expansion into Australia (**TD** 04 Jun 2024).

The move marks a new chapter for the business's operations across Sydney and Melbourne, bringing together its previous acquisitions, MP Travel and Verve Travel, under the Gray Dawes Travel and CT Partners banner.

"With over 60 dedicated staff across offices in Melbourne and Sydney, joining CT Partners opens up new opportunities to better serve our existing and future clients - both domestically and globally," said Kathryn Sari, Gray Dawes Senior VP APAC.

Gray Dawes Travel in Australia delivers bespoke travel solutions to clients across corporate, MICE, and the luxury leisure sectors.

Amex's APAC duo

AMERICAN Express Global Business Travel (Amex GBT) has made two new appointments to drive growth in its SME division in the APAC region.

Elizabeth Georgopoulos has been promoted to Sales Director for APAC, where she will lead the region's Enterprise and Midmarket sales team.

Additionally, Chris Andony has become the Senior Director, Client Management APAC SME.

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MTA plants party vibes



MOBILE Travel Agents (MTA) has kicked off its annual national conference in style, which is this year themed around its 25th anniversary milestone.

Taking place in Adelaide, suppliers, advisors and other guests celebrated the beginning of the gathering last night at Plant 4 in Bowden, previously the historic Clipsal building, now turned into a multi-story entertaining venue.

Guests were treated to an array of share plates from buffalo mozzarella to braised beef cheeks, while the drinks also flowed freely, with minimal interruption from speeches.

Over 450 guests are attending the MTA National Conference, including 230 advisors, with speaker sessions running across today and tomorrow.

A range of well-known presenters will take the stage, including Olympian Grant Hackett; Glow London founder Emma Harris; Director at Birds Eye View Consulting Nicole O'Sullivan; and Grow My Money

founder Pascale Helyar-Moray.

TV presenter and musician Rob Mills will also take care of the emcee duties for the event.

MTA has included a number of activities for delegates this afternoon, such as tours of Adelaide city, the Barossa Valley and McLaren Vale, the opportunity to do the Adelaide Oval roof climb, and Luma high tea at the Playford, and more. *DF*

Pictured at the conference opening are Glow London's Emma Harris, MTA Chief Executive Officer Don Beattie, and MTA Marketing and Communications Manager, Kerryn Taylor.

CitizenM completed

MARRIOTT International has completed its \$355m acquisition of lifestyle hotel brand Citizen M, adding 37 hotels to its portfolio.

CitizenM hotels will continue to be bookable via its original platforms until its integration into Marriott's systems is complete, which is expected to take place later this year.

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Agents can earn an \$800 gift card for every couple booked on **Trafalgar's** maiden river cruise season by 30 Sep on select 2026 cruises. Clients can also save \$2,300 on itineraries including the eight-day 'Best of the Danube' between Budapest and Passau. To avail the offer, agents must quote TR2610S. To find out more, [CLICK HERE](#).

Time is running out to save \$350 per person on summer 2026 itineraries from **Albatross Tours** booked by 31 Jul. Popular tours eligible for the offer include the 18-day 'Mountains, Myths & Ancient Empires', which travels from Sofia to Athens over 18 days or an 18-day round-trip loop of Portugal and Spain, departing from Madrid. [CLICK HERE](#) for details.

Fancy some team building in the Whitsundays? Whisk the team away to **Daydream Island Resort & Living Reef** with its new Corporate Retreat Day Delegate package and enjoy one free room for every 25 booked. There will be cocktails on arrival for all guests. [CLICK HERE](#) for details.

Up to \$2,200 in airfare credit per couple is available from **AAT Kings** on eligible itineraries in its newly launched 2026/27 program. Credit can be combined with other brochure savings but applies to a limited range, including popular tours such as the 'Essence of New Zealand' and more. Bookings must be made by 30 Sep - [CLICK HERE](#) for more information.


Special rates on a Deluxe Villa and Superior Deluxe with plunge pool are now available at **Water Garden Sigiriya** in Sri Lanka for stays from 01 Sep to 31 Oct. Rates are valid for two people and include breakfast and dinner, marking a 20% cut on regular rates. [CLICK HERE](#) for info and quote promo code 'UTCWGSVA' when booking.

Sheraton Grand Mirage Resort Port Douglas has launched a new Couples Coastal Retreat package to invite partners to slow down and enjoy time together. Priced at \$565 per night for a minimum three-night stay, guests can enjoy daily breakfast, \$100 F&B credit, a private pool cabana and more, for stays between Sep-Mar. [CLICK HERE](#) for details.

NRMA members can enjoy two free nights on a four-night stay at **NRMA Halls Gap Holiday Park** in the Victorian Grampians, available for booking until 04 Aug for stays until 18 Sep. The promotion coincides with the Glow Festival, a series of 170 events organised by locals and intended to welcome visitors to the region. [CLICK HERE](#) to book.

Agents can earn bonus commission of up to 15% on **Luxury Escapes'** weekly special offers. This week's bonus commission deal applies to the five-star InterContinental Bali Resort. Extra perks include one child aged 11 years and under staying and eating for free. [CLICK HERE](#) for details.




Special fares have been released by **Solomon Airlines** on direct flights between Brisbane and Auckland to Port Vila, Vanuatu. For bookings made by 15 Aug in t class, agents can fly Brisbane to Espiritu Santo from \$652 return. Valid travel periods apply. For more details, [CLICK HERE](#).



Stay Updated

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Heat applied to Airbnb

AIRBNB has been accused of price gouging and allowing fake hosts on its website during the aftermath of the Los Angeles wildfires, a new legal filing in the United States has alleged.

Launched by the LA city attorney's office this week, the civil lawsuit claims the short-stay rental platform was in violation of California's Anti-Gouging Law when it increased the rental prices of as many as 3,000 properties across the city.

The law, which comes into effect after an emergency is declared, prohibits the prices of essential goods and services, such as rental housing, from being increased by more than 10%.

The filing also claims that "Airbnb misleadingly represents to prospective renters that [it] has 'verified' the accuracy of the identities of hosts and locations of properties on the site".

"In reality, Airbnb's 'verified hosts' include 'hosts' with non-



existent or false identities, and 'verified' property addresses include addresses that are incorrect or non-existent."

The city of LA is calling for Airbnb to potentially pay millions in damages, calling for penalties of up to US\$2,500 for each violation to deter price-gouging and unlawful representations. *JM*

Records in Germany

GERMANY is predicted to break records in every major tourism metric for 2025, according to new data released by the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC).

The organisation's *Economic Impact Research* report showed visitor spend across international and domestic in Germany will both set new heights.

International visitor spend is on track to hit €57 billion for the full year, coupled with €425 billion among domestic travellers.

Tourism as a total contribution to Germany's GDP is expected to hit €499 billion, equivalent to 11.6% of the country's total, with 6.5 million jobs supported or 14% of the national workforce.

WTTC President and CEO Julia Simpson said Germany's call to make tourism a division of the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy has empowered sustainable growth.

"Germany is once again a powerhouse in global tourism, and this momentum must be protected with smart investment and bold ambition," Simpson said.

Tours taking flight

NEW private birding tours are now available at Sacha Lodge, a 2,020-hectare private ecological reserve in the Ecuadorian Amazon, where almost half of the 1,600 bird species registered in the country can be spotted.

Private specialist guides are available to escort the most avid of bird fans to help identify the animals by sight and sound.

Highlights include night expeditions, the Canopy Exploration Crane, the Yasuni Parrot Clay Lick, the 940-foot-long canopy wall, the 360-degree panoramic Kapok Tower, & more.

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Associate Publisher - Jo-Anne Hui-Miller

ADVERTISING & MARKETING

Head of Sales & Marketing - Sean Harrigan
advertising@traveldaily.com.au

GENERAL MANAGER & PUBLISHER

Matthew Vince

ACCOUNTS

accounts@traveldaily.com.au

Suite 1, Level 2, 64 Talavera Rd
Macquarie Park NSW 2113 Australia
Tel: 1300 799 220 (+61 2 8007 6760)

info@traveldaily.com.au



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