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## Guscic share move

**WEB** Travel Group Managing Director John Guscic has sold 2,723,628 ordinary shares to settle amounts owing to Goldman Sachs Financial Markets under previously disclosed funding arrangements.

Disclosed in an ASX update this morning, the share changes also showed Guscic purchased OTC capped call options referencing 2,723,628 issued ordinary shares from Macquarie Bank Ltd.

## Kaptio touches down

**FOLLOWING** a successful trial in Australia with Intrepid Travel, Icelandic travel reservations company Kaptio has established a local sales presence for the first time to cement future growth.

To spearhead operations, former Traveltek Head of Operations Rebecca Esterhuizen has been appointed the company's Head of Region, APAC.

"Rebecca's experience and connections in the travel tech space will be a key driver of our next stage of global expansion," said Tracy Sharp, Vice President of Commercial for Kaptio.

Outside of its phase one rollout of services with Intrepid, Kaptio has also revealed the landing of "multiple" travel clients in Australia, with formal announcements to be made in the coming months.

The company believes Australia represents fertile ground for expansion, citing a demand from travel businesses for enhanced cloud-based travel CRM and booking solutions.

Alongside the commercial expansion, Kaptio has also established technical support in

kaptio

the region, a move it said will ensure clients across all time zones will benefit from its 'follow-the-sun' model around the clock.

Part of its Australian debut will also see it deepen engagement with industry bodies like CATO and ATIA. AB

## We will return Tue

**JUST** a reminder that **TD** will not be published on Mon due to the King's Birthday public holiday.

We will however be back bashing the keyboard for all the big travel stories breaking on Tue.

## Today's issue of TD

**Travel Daily** today features eight pages of the latest news, plus a cover page from **btTB**, a photo page from **Viking** and our **Corporate Update**, and full pages from:

- Back-Roads Touring
- Viva Holidays

## Biz event hits Sydney

**AUSTRALASIA'S** largest business travel event with **btTB** is taking place 07-08 Aug in Sydney, featuring a conference and gala dinner and awards ceremony.

See the **front page** for details.

## Literary adventures

**IMMERSE** yourself in the world of Shakespeare with Back-Roads, as you follow in his footsteps through the United Kingdom.

See **page nine** for information.

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## VA confirms listing

**VIRGIN** Australia has confirmed the worst-kept secret in travel, today announcing its return to the ASX on Tue, 24 Jun.

As flagged by **TD** this week (**TD** 04 Jun), the share price will be set at \$2.90 each, raising \$685 million and creating a market cap of \$2.3 billion - read more **HERE**.



### WIN A WILD BUSH LUXURY ESCAPE

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Every eligible booking earns you one entry into the draw to win a 2-night all-inclusive stay for two, valued at up to \$5,550.

Offer valid on new bookings made until 30 June 2025. T&Cs apply.

## Educate and win: Beattie

### EXCLUSIVE

**MTA** CEO Don Beattie has revealed the most common traits of high performing home-based travel advisors are education, marketing, and offering highly personalised services.

Speaking with **TD**, the agency network's chief said the unsuccessful people he had observed in the industry are those who neglected education and personal development.

"The problem is, that's what's going to give you the key to getting new customers," he said.

**MTA** has focused on offering plenty of education opportunities for its agent network over the last 10 to 15 years.

Successful home-based agents are also continually marketing their businesses, Beattie added.

"The funny thing about marketing is most people will say, 'When should I market? When I've got the time.'

"That's the wrong answer, if



you've got time, you haven't got business," he added.

Importantly, high-performing advisors take the time to offer personalised services that go beyond knowing their customers' date of birth or dog's name, Beattie explained.

"For example, if I was a skier, somebody might come to me and say, 'I know you've done skiing, but have you tried snowboarding on fresh snow?'

"I'd like them to stretch me a little bit as a customer. I don't want to be pigeonholed into my age group that looks at [particular] things." **JHM**

Home Ex is now live - find out more details **HERE**.

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## A big hooray for LA

**THE** ultimate Los Angeles famil is up for grabs for a lucky agent courtesy of Hellworld's wholesale Viva Holidays brand, including accommodation at W Hollywood, a ticket to see Dua Lipa and Incubus live in concert, plus plenty more perks - see **p10** for the full details.



Wendy Wu Tours

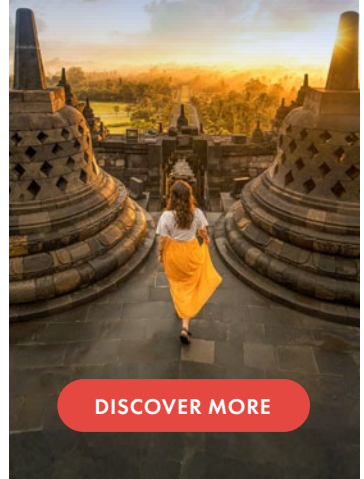
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## ATEC confirms new Chair

**THE** Australian Tourism Export Council (ATEC) has confirmed its new Chairman, with Richard Doyle (**pictured**) appointed to take on the role.

A long-standing ATEC board member and Deputy Chair, Doyle's tourism industry experience includes holding positions such as General Manager, Global Sales of SeaLink Marine & Tourism, Head of Sales & Marketing at Captain Cook Cruises, and Director Asia/Japan & Cruise at Tourism NT.

He has also acted as an independent consultant.

Doyle brings a strong background in international marketing, strategic planning, sales leadership, and stakeholder engagement with tourism and trade networks across Southeast Asia, Northeast Asia, the USA, UK, Europe, and Japan.

He is also a member of the Australian Institute of Company



Directors (AICD).

In a statement, ATEC said that its "board and members extend their sincere thanks and appreciation to outgoing Chairman, Denis Pierce, for his significant contribution and leadership over the last nine years, supporting the organisation through the challenges associated with the pandemic years".

The formal transition will take place at the ATEC National Board Meeting in Sep. DF

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## Tariffs worse than pandemic: Canada

**THE** impact of US President Donald Trump's economic policies may impact Canada's travel trade more than the pandemic, according to Association of Canadian Travel Agencies President Wendy Paradis.

Speaking in Orlando at a travel conference, Paradis said the ongoing trade war between Canada and the United States was the largest issue facing travel agencies and advisors.

"What's really important for everyone to know is the current tariffs as they are today - should they stay in place - the impact...is much worse than the pandemic."

"That's because travel is often the first industry to be impacted and the last to fully recover when an economic issue arises."

A 2023 survey showed 36% of Canada's travel agencies felt they would close within three years because of COVID loan payments.

## Adventure changes

**CARNIVAL** Cruise Line has cancelled a batch of itineraries for *Carnival Adventure* in 2027, citing short-term changes to planning.

Passengers affected are those booked on cruises between 17 May and 14 Jun, 2027.

Scrapped sailings that were due to depart between 03-11 Jun will be offered \$25 of onboard credit per person, up to a maximum of \$50 per stateroom, while bookings for 17 May, 25 May, and 14 Jun 2027 will receive \$50 of ship credit per person and limited to \$100 per stateroom.

Those who do not rebook will be entitled to a full refund.

## Sweden now safer

**WITH** a lower threat of terrorism now in place, Australia has formally lowered its advice for travellers to Sweden, yesterday moving the advisory to 'exercise normal safety precautions overall'.

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## HLO unveils new luxury cruise move

**HELLOWORLD** will house its luxury cruise offerings within a new brand, with the company this week unveiling the Signature Collection by Cruiseco.

The label will sit alongside Viva Gold, another recently launched brand for premium land product, and will feature luxury cruise packages with elite brands.

Introduced at the Helloworld Travel Owners/Managers conference in Vancouver, the company invited delegates to cast a vote for the brand's new logo.

Signature Collection will benefit from Cruiseco's cabin allocations, which allow for fixed prices and availability - a feature which will soon be expanded to river cruises due to their strong popularity.

Helloworld also announced agents will soon be able to enjoy commission on shore excursions booked through Cruiseco, which will launch for agents in Australia and New Zealand.



The brand will see specialist air and cruise packages designed in partnership with the company's Air Tickets division, with major trending destinations and value to be featured.

Helloworld COO and Executive Director Cinzia Burnes (pictured) said it is terrific to see cruise leading the way in travel.

"Both the Signature Collection and our new cruise-and-air packages are designed to meet the evolving needs of today's

cruise travellers and of course agents," Burnes said.

"They reflect our commitment to delivering tailored cruise experiences across both the luxury and value spectrums, giving agents and their clients more choice, flexibility, and confidence when booking their next cruise," she added. *ML*

## Wild Bush incentive

**EXPERIENCE** Co's Wild Bush

Luxury brand is giving agents a chance to win a two-night, all-inclusive luxury stay for two people at Bamurru Plains in the NT or Arkaba Homestead in SA.

To be in the running, agents need to make as many Wild Bush Luxury bookings as they can this month, with the winner to be announced after 30 Jun.

The prize package includes all meals, drinks and experiences, valued up to \$5,500.



## Window Seat

**PAYING** for a business class ticket is supposed to offer passengers more, but perhaps not this much more.

The premium cabin was treated to an impromptu burlesque show on a recent British Airways flight from San Francisco, after a flight attendant stripped off and started to dance wildly.

However, this was no aspiring West End performer, but rather a member of the cabin crew under the influence of party drugs after popping pills in the bathroom.

Suspensions were aroused when the 41-year-old staff member failed to show up during meal service, and when he was found, staff promptly dressed the man and restrained him in first class.



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## Agents on the bus with AAT



AAT Kings last week concluded its South Australia trade and consumer roadshow, as well as a trade famil that offered agents an exclusive opportunity to experience first-hand some of the unique adventures in the state.

The roadshow ran across five days, included 15 events across a variety of iconic South Australian locations, and afforded 90 travel consultants the opportunity to inspect an AAT Kings coach and connect with local consumers.

"After a successful launch in Queensland, we were thrilled to bring the AAT Kings experience to the regions of SA," AAT Kings Group CEO Ben Hall said.

"These events are a great opportunity for agents and consumers alike to connect with our product offerings in an immersive way, all while exploring the beauty and culture of SA."

The famil included 28 travel advisors from across Australia and New Zealand and was supported

by the South Australian Tourism Commission.

The famil mirrored AAT Kings' five-day 'Remarkable Adelaide to Kangaroo Island' itinerary, and kicked off with a scenic drive to the historic village of Hahndorf, followed by several days across Kangaroo Island.

Highlights of the trip included visits to the 500-million-year-old Remarkable Rocks and wildlife encounters with NZ fur seals. DF

### Velocity promotion

**VIRGIN** Australia Velocity members can choose between earning double award points or status credits if they register and book by 13 Jun.

The new membership promotion was released this week, and applies to domestic and international short-haul flights, not services like the upcoming Australia and Doha flights in partnership with QR.



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## A new era of luxury cruise

**OCEANIA** Cruise's first Sonata-Class ship has officially begun construction, with a steel-cutting ceremony taking place this week at the Fincantieri-Marghera shipyard in Venice.

The cruise line's ninth vessel, *Oceania Sonata*, will set sail on her maiden voyage in 2027, followed by her sister ship, *Oceania Arietta*.

According to the cruise line, both of the "groundbreaking" ships will be the most spacious vessels in the fleet, featuring more amenities than ever before.

"*Oceania Sonata* heralds the dawn of a new era in luxury cruising," enthused Jason Montague, Chief Luxury Officer of Oceania Cruises.

"We are proud to continue our legacy of innovation alongside Fincantieri, our shipbuilding partner for close to 20 years.

"Together, we have crafted ships that stand as some of the most acclaimed examples of luxury,



elegance, comfort, and Italian craftsmanship at sea."

Oceania's next ship to debut on the seas will be *Allura*, entering service from Trieste in Italy on 18 Jul 2025.

She will cruise six days to Athens, then call into the Eastern Mediterranean including Rijeka, Croatia; Ravenna, Italy; Dubrovnik, Croatia; and Kotor, Montenegro.

*Allura* will then embark on a number of voyages in North America, before her premier season in the Caribbean. JHM

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## That's a wrap on Viking's Vör Nights

**VIKING'S** popular Vör Nights made a highly anticipated return in 2025, following their last run in 2023, and they certainly did not disappoint. Held across Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Perth and Adelaide, the events were a resounding success, selling out in every city and welcoming over 1,000 travel agents.

Each evening was packed with learning, laughter and heart-racing fun, as agents enjoyed dinner and drinks while discovering the latest on Viking's river, ocean and expedition voyages.

This year saw a record number of cruises given away, including an incredible 13-day Antarctica voyage awarded to the quiz winner at each event.

With thousands of dollars in prizes up for grabs, Vör Nights once again proved to be an unforgettable night of celebration.

**ANOTHER** cruise, another winner. One of many lucky agents to sail away with a voyage.



**JENNI** Pavlos from Flight Centre Warwick with Viking's Shaun Kavanagh after accepting her cruise prize.



**TEAM** Viking ready to rock in Adelaide.



**EMCEE** Andrew Gill brought the energy, laughs and unforgettable vibes every night and kept the fun rolling.



**ANEETA** Curtis of Going Global proudly showing off her cruise prize.



**THE** RAA team out in force at the Adelaide Vör Night.



**THESE** agents had a Vör-tastic night in Sydney.



**THE** Temple Travel Group getting into the spirit.





## CORPORATE UPDATE

### SAP debuts AI tool in Oz

**SAP'S** new Concur Travel Solution has been launched to the market, promising to deliver a modern, consumer-grade user experience and integrate advanced AI capabilities to streamline corporate travel management and enhance decision-making.

The new tool pledges to consolidate travel bookings, policy compliance, and sustainability insights into one mobile-first solution, making it easier for companies to control all aspects of employee travel.

AI has been a cornerstone of the upgrade, with the integration of the AI-powered Request



Assistant for automatic, pre-trip cost estimates, and the planned integration of SAP's generative AI assistant, Joule, to further support predictive cost estimates, intelligent meeting location recommendations, and dynamic itinerary management.

Jonathan Beeby, MD of SAP Concur Australia and New Zealand (**pictured**) said the move will unlock the convergence of travel and expense data.

"Using new Concur Travel with Concur Expense gives organisations a consolidated view of all spending activity for real-time decision-making," he said.

He added that travel bookings will automatically populate expense reports, "minimising manual data entry and errors", while integrated policy enforcement tools will allow businesses to embed compliance into the employee journey.

Concur Travel aims to end fragmented systems that are inefficient, limit data visibility, and increase the likelihood of compliance breaches. *DF*

### Goldman gets steer

**GOLDMAN** Group's David Goldman has been named as part of the steering committee of the flagged partnership between ATIA and ATMC (**TD** 02 Jun).

The Goldman Group's joint Managing Director links with respected industry leaders Penny Spencer (Chair), Sarah Szubanski, and Oliver Tams.

Announced on Mon, the proposed partnership sees ATMC operate as a dedicated, member-led committee within ATIA, keeping its brand and autonomy while also benefitting from ATIA's national platform, policy expertise, and various workforce employment programs.

A JV agreement is set to commence in Jul for 24 months.

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### QR serves up more for VA



**QATAR** Airways revealed its new in-flight dining menu in a special event yesterday at premium restaurant Woodcut in Sydney.

Curated by award-winning chef and Woodcut owner Ross Lusted, the menu will debut on 12 Jun in first and business cabins on board Qatar Airways and Virgin Australia departing from Australia to Doha.

A tribute to sustainable, seasonal Australian produce, the new menus will be refreshed every three months for a total of four cycles.

"Food and dining is such an important part of the Qatar Airways world-class service we deliver, we really want high-end quality restaurant service and delivery," said Justin Kestel, Qatar Airways Regional Manager for Australia and New Zealand.

"There's another amazing partnership kicking off next week, which this is all part of, and that's our partnership with Virgin and we're incredibly excited.

"The first VA flight will be checking in at this time next week [with] extra flights to Doha.

"It's a very exciting time for the Australian consumer," he added.

On Qatar Airways' first class menu is Fraser Island spanner crab cakes for the appetiser, Black Angus beef tenderloin for the main, followed by a dark chocolate dessert.

The business class menu comprises seared cured fish plate, lamb osso bucco style for the main, then a basque cheesecake.

"It's not every day that you get to partner with the world's best airline to re-imagine what fine-dining can look and feel like in the sky, and to do it in a way that reflects the highest standards no less," said Lusted.

"Every dish is curated with care, drawing on my experience in high-end restaurants while adapting to the unique challenges of inflight dining." - *JHM*

**Pictured:** Antony McNeil, Vice President Culinary Standards and Design, Qatar Airways; the culinary king Ross Lusted; and Justin Kestel, Qatar Airways Regional Manager for Australia and New Zealand.

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Travellers can enjoy the comfort of business class as part of a new global 'Time for Premium Escapades' offer from **Malaysia Airlines**. Return fares to Asia start from \$3,199 and \$7,069 to Europe, with seats on sale until 19 Jun for travel until 31 May 2026. Members of the carrier's Enrich loyalty program can take a further 5% off. Seats available to book now.

Last-minute deals have been launched by **Globus** and **Cosmos** to entice Aussies to abandon the cold and head overseas this winter. Savings of up to \$400 per couple are available for 2025 departures, with at least \$200 and in some cases up to \$600 off the sticker price for 2026 tours. Adventures in Italy, Japan, Scandinavia, Scotland and Alaska and more are on offer. **CLICK HERE** for Globus deals and **CLICK HERE** for Cosmos.

A range of destinations can be booked with **Singapore Airlines'** new 'Time to Travel' fares, available now. Return fares to Shanghai start from \$792, with London available for \$1,747. **CLICK HERE** and log into SQ's agent portal Agent 360 for the full list of destinations.

Families can enjoy a complimentary full meal package at Plantation Island Resort in Fiji through **The Celebration Travel Company** on stays in both late 2025 and early 2026. Discounted drinks packages can also be added on to make a complete holiday. **CLICK HERE** for more details.


Some great savings have been released by **AAT Kings** on its Top End tours, both short breaks and longer adventures. The three-day 'Kakadu and Nitmiluk' itinerary was \$1,729 and is now \$1,556, while the 11-day 'Northern Territory Explorer' was \$6,775 and is now \$5,420. Discounts are available until 30 Jun for departures until the end of Aug.

Promotional 'Hello Blue' fares are now in market from **All Nippon Airways** (ANA) for travellers in Perth and include a free side trip to Japan. On sale until 10 Jun, return fares start from \$1,075 inclusive of all taxes. Three departure windows are open - **CLICK HERE** for more.

In line with Aussies booking more back-to-back cruises, **Cruise Traveller** is offering the third cruise free if booking two consecutive expeditions with Atlas Ocean Voyages. There's also free airfare credit, pre-cruise hotel stays and onboard wi-fi included. **CLICK HERE** for more info.

Warm up this winter with **Pan Pacific Hotel Group's** mid-year sale. Rooms are now available for 30% off for Discovery members and 15% off for non-members in Sydney, Melbourne and Perth, with prices starting from \$180 per night on stays up to 31 Aug. More details **HERE**.



Fancy saving an extra 5% on an all-inclusive **HX Expeditions** trip? Simply sign up to the HX Explorers loyalty program - there's not even a requirement to have travelled with the brand before. Former HX passengers can save up to 10%, with deals combinable with special 130th anniversary offers now in market, including exclusive fares and free suite upgrades. Book by 30 Jun by calling 1300 159 127.



## Stay Updated

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## Cocky blazes new trail



**COCKY** Guides will this weekend lead a group of blind and low-vision travellers through the Northern Rivers Trail in the Tweed as part of an initiative in partnership with The Tweed Tourism Co.

An award-winning not-for-profit organisation, Cocky Guides has been operating since 2018 and is dedicated to providing blind and low-vision Australians with multisensory small-group travel experiences that work for them.

The trip will offer local tourism operators invaluable experience working with the Cocky Guides team and its clients.

With the learnings from this weekend's trip, Cocky Guides and The Tweed Tourism Co will coordinate accessible tourism workshops and family trips for local businesses, offering operators the chance

to gain knowledge directly from travellers with low vision.

"We've always incorporated physical elements in our experiences - from kayaking to sensory walks," said founder of Cocky Guides, James McFarlane.

"But now more of our travellers want to actively connect with local communities.

"This weekend, we'll join the Kingscliff Parkrun and explore the Northern Rivers Rail Trail, supporting and spotlighting inclusive tourism experiences along the way."

Sally Scott, GM of The Tweed Tourism Co, praised the initiative.

"Hosting Cocky Guides and their travellers is a powerful opportunity to put... improvements into action and gather valuable feedback from real guests with lived experience," she said. *DF*



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- ★ Dance the night away at the Dua Lipa concert
- ★ Reignite early 2000s alt-rock nostalgia with Incubus live in concert!
- ★ Enjoy a Citadel Outlets shopping spree
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