



Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today features eight pages of news, including our **Luxury page**, plus full pages from:

- City of Gold Coast
- Helloworld OMC Vancouver 2025
- Viva Holidays

Japan mulls reform

THE Japanese Government has proposed making health insurance mandatory for all international tourists, following a spate of travellers skipping the country with unpaid medical bills.

The new measure is expected to be included in the next annual economic policy review for cabinet, and according to Japan's Health Ministry, in Sep 2024 alone, more than 11,000 foreign tourists received medical treatment at around 5,500 hospitals nationwide.

Of those patients, 90 left the country without paying bills, resulting in JPY61 million (A\$645,000) in unpaid charges.

Thanks from HLO

HELLOWORLD Travel is thanking all those who joined it for its recent OMC conference in Vancouver - head to **page 10**.

The fund begins

GOLD Coast business owners are being invited to find out what a nature-based tourism grant can do for their business on **page nine** of today's **Travel Daily**.

Jetstar Asia axe boosts Oz

QANTAS Group's decision to shut down Jetstar Asia (3K) (**TD** breaking news) will have a significant positive flow-on effect for its core Australian and New Zealand markets.

The decision was announced this morning in a statement on the ASX, which also outlined how Qantas Group will seek to redeploy hardware and finances.

Qantas will progressively move 13 Airbus A320s currently in the 3K fleet to Australia and New Zealand to support fleet renewal and create around 100 local jobs.

The update described the jets as being "mid-life", and accompanied the news that Jetstar Asia would unlock up to \$500 million in fleet capital that will be recycled into the Group's core businesses.

Qantas Group CEO Vanessa Hudson said, "We're making disciplined decisions which recycle capital across our business and prioritise it to



stronger performing segments as well as strategic growth initiatives like Project Sunrise".

The prime reason for the shuttering of Jetstar Asia was poor performance, which is expected to post a \$35 million underlying EBIT loss for this financial year.

The closure only impacts the intra-Asia routes operated by the airline from its base in Singapore, and Qantas has stressed it will not impact Jetstar Airways' (JQ) domestic and international operations in Australia and New Zealand, or Jetstar Japan.

MEANWHILE, Qantas Group also noted that the disruptions from Cyclone Alfred will have a \$30 million earnings impact. **DF**

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Lose your Virginia

VIRGINIA is for lovers, with Viva Holidays highlighting three of its packages travelling to the Old Dominion.

Travellers can join the four-day 'Bristol Birthplace of Country Music' tour, and the four-day 'Colonial Williamsburg' - **page 11**.



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Scott Dunn HK move

FLIGHT Centre Travel Group's luxury Scott Dunn brand is preparing to launch its ultra-high-net-worth services in Hong Kong.

The operator is now looking for two recruits to join as relationship managers to assist with the introduction of Scott Dunn Private in the destination.

The jobs will be based in Hong Kong and be charged with growing and managing a dedicated pool of Scott Dunn private members.

Air NZ lands in the West

AUCKLAND will be linked with Western Sydney Intl from mid-2027, after Air New Zealand confirmed it will launch non-stop services (**TD** breaking news).

Subject to regulatory approval, the new route will complement the carrier's existing flights to Sydney's Kingsford Smith Airport.

The new route was secured via the NSW Government's Take-Off Fund, which tandems with the Aviation Attraction Fund to lure airlines to Sydney's new airport in time for its opening in late 2026.

Flight schedules and ticketing options are yet to be determined, with Air New Zealand CEO Greg Foran stating the airline is pleased to be leading the way in connecting the two cities.

"Western Sydney International represents an exciting step forward for aviation in Australia, and we're delighted to be the first trans-Tasman carrier to signal our intent to operate there as we continue to grow," Foran said.

Western Sydney International CEO Simon Hickey said the route will connect one of Australia's most diverse regions with New Zealand's largest city and main



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holiday gateway.

"WSI's innovative terminal facilities and use of next-generation technology will offer Air New Zealand passengers a seamless, intuitive and meaningful airport experience, while our 24-hour capacity will give people more choice on when and how they choose to fly," Hickey said.

Air New Zealand's forthcoming arrival positions it alongside Qantas, Jetstar and Singapore Airlines as the first carriers to fly from Western Sydney Int'l.

Recent market research by Nielsen shows Sydney is the most popular destination for Kiwis travelling overseas. *ML*

LA curfew in place

LOS Angeles Mayor Karen Bass has issued a curfew for the city's downtown areas in a bid to stop vandalism and looting that has broken out in response to an immigration crackdown.

HK Airlines eyes MEL

HONG Kong Airlines President Jeff Sun Jianfeng has confirmed Melbourne flights are on the carrier's road map this year.

"We've secured its air traffic rights [for Melbourne Airport] already and will confirm its service at a later time," he said.

Melbourne-Hong Kong services will be introduced from Sep at the earliest, and reflect a remarkable comeback for the carrier, which only three years ago was mired in a deep financial crisis.



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Rodricks era ends at LH

WELL-KNOWN aviation executive Anil Rodricks will end a multiple decade representative career with the Lufthansa Group at the end of Oct, as he moves to pursue new interests (**TD** breaking news yesterday).

For more than 20 years, Rodricks has led the local presence of the Lufthansa Group, including subsidiaries Swiss International, Austrian Airlines, Brussels Airlines and Eurowings.

First joining The Walshe Group in 2002 as Swiss first established itself in this market, Rodricks was a key hire when the agency was named the airline's General Sales Agent for Australia.

Rodricks has played a major role growing Swiss' local market share and overseeing its integration into the Lufthansa Group in 2014.

The Walshe Group founder and Managing Director, Jacqui Walshe, said she is grateful to Rodricks for two decades



of leadership, dedication and professionalism, wishing him every success on his next chapter.

"His deep knowledge of the aviation landscape, commitment to excellence, and long-standing relationships have made a lasting impact on our business, our partners, and the wider travel industry in Australia," she said.

The Walshe Group will now work closely with Lufthansa Group to manage the transition as Rodricks hands over to a new representative, with further details on a successor to come.

Rodricks' final day with The Walshe Group will be 31 Oct. *ML*

Travelex appoints

CURRENCY exchange brand Travelex has recruited Asokan Sathurayar as its new Retail Director in Australia and New Zealand to drive its next phase of regional growth.

Key to Sathurayar's new role will be overseeing Travelex's regional retail network and driving its omnichannel distribution strategy.

He brings more than 20 years of retail experience, most recently as retail head at Dusk Australasia.

VA ready for take-off

THE long-awaited Virgin Australia to Doha flights in partnership with Qatar Airways will take off tomorrow from SYD.

Virgin Australia CEO Dave Emerson and Sydney Airport CEO Scott Charlton will join Qatar Airways executives and cabin crew to mark the milestone tomorrow morning.

Read all about it in tomorrow's edition of **Travel Daily**.

Thai border skirmish

THAILAND has decreased the amount of time that checkpoints on the Cambodia border are open, and has banned some crossing points altogether amid a military skirmish between the two nations started last month.

Rex buyer emerges

NEW York-based distressed debt investor Anchorage Capital Advisors is among a list of parties that have submitted a proposal to purchase Rex, *The Australian Financial Review* has revealed.

Anchorage was the underbidder when US private equity firm Indigo Partners bought Denver-based Frontier Airlines in a deal worth \$US145 million (\$224 million) in 2013.

Time is running out for the administrators of Rex to find a suitable buyer, with the Federal Govt giving until 30 Jun for it to happen, otherwise it has floated the idea of assuming ownership.

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ADL eyeing several international ports

EXCLUSIVE

AFTER a spate of new and returning routes announced in recent months, Adelaide Airport's Managing Director Brenton Cox (**pictured**) has several new international ports in his sights.

Speaking with *Travel Daily*, Cox is adamant there are some obvious new routes he would like added to the South Australian capital's burgeoning connections.

"We have got some fabulous capacity growth to consolidate now, but we do have an airport vision and we have been public about what those are," Cox said.

"This is not an exclusive set of targets, but certainly right now, what would make sense [is] direct services to Ho Chi Minh City, New Delhi, Tokyo, and Manila.

"That's not to be exclusive, because there are plenty of other places that would also make sense, but those [ports] have large amounts of indirect



flow right now and their points-of-sale are very balanced and the reasons for travel are really balanced," Cox said.

While the Adelaide Airport chief conceded those route opportunities "won't be coming out tomorrow or the next day", he suggested that over the coming years, they would be logical additions to the network.

The recent flurry of new connections to ADL have included San Francisco with United Airlines (**TD** 03 Apr), Auckland via Qantas

(**TD** 16 May), Hong Kong with Cathay Pacific (**TD** 23 May), as well as Christchurch with Air New Zealand (**TD** 04 Jun).

The lofty expansion ambitions aside, Adelaide Airport has also seen a significant increase in passenger movement this year, with the latest figures for Feb showing a 17% increase inbound (37,176 to 43,742), as well as a 19.9% spike in outbound (29,696 to 35,612).

Singapore, Denpasar and Doha were the top three direct international connections to Adelaide in Feb, while Dubai shot up to fifth after Emirates restarted direct service late last year with a Boeing 777-200.

Adelaide Airport is also pouring more than \$600 million in capital investment to upgrade the hub through to 2028.

These include projects to expand capacity and improve the passenger experience. *DF/JHM*

A&K at the museum

TWO new nine-night small group journeys have been introduced by Abercrombie & Kent to meet demand for the opening of the new Grand Egyptian Museum in Cairo (**TD** 25 Feb).

The itineraries will take travellers inside the new museum to admire the treasures of King Tutankhamun, among thousands of other ancient artefacts.

Guests will also be able to touch the paws of the ancient Sphinx as part of an exclusive private visit to the museum.

Trips also include a private charter flight to Abu Simbel and a visit to the twin temples.

The new itineraries allow guests to mingle at the residence of A&K Senior Vice President Egypt, Amr Badr, for a welcome function, followed by a four-night cruise along the Nile river.

Six Small Group Journeys have been scheduled, along with options for guests to extend into their own Tailormade Journeys.

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moments



Envoyage makes new trio of appointments

ENVOYAGE has expanded its global product leadership team, creating two brand-new roles to provide members with improved solutions and support.

The independent travel advisor network's National Product Leader Paul Murrell (**pictured left**) will step into the newly created role of Global Air Leader, while Shauna Stedner (**pictured centre**) has been appointed Global Supply Partner.

Murrell will ensure Envoyage's members are provided with more efficient air solutions, while Stedner will focus on helping the business deliver the best possible product range, pricing, and marketplace experience.

They will both report into Global Product Leader Jodie Burnard, who said the two will work to significantly enhance Envoyage's product marketplace.

Lee Anne Hosking (**pictured right**) will also rejoin Flight Centre



Travel Group (FCTG), succeeding Murrell as Product Director.

"Paul and Shauna's roles will be absolutely crucial as we continue to navigate an economy where clients are demanding more of their travel experiences - specifically more choice and more attractive pricing," Burnard said.

Murrell has more than 20 years of experience at FCTG, including 16 years in leadership roles delivering product innovation and strategy, & driving record growth.

Meanwhile, Stedner has been



with FCTG for more than 20 years, having most recently served as Travel Technology Product Manager for the company's Global Supply division.

The New York-based Stedner will also help Envoyage with its stateside growth, Burnard said.

"We're also heavily focused on growth in the US market, so having Shauna on the ground with our teams there will allow us to achieve better momentum and understanding in this space," Burnard added. *MS*



Window Seat

THE Federal Aviation Administration has decided to "get with the times" and retire the floppy disks (Gen Z, see pic below) and Windows 95 program it has been relying on since last century.

The head of the agency, Chris Rocheleau, said it is finally time to replace the retro tech, which many US air traffic control facilities still use because the subsystems they serve were built in the 1990s.

It is expected to take at least four years and tens of billions of dollars to replace the archaic systems with modern tech.



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Aussies make new Seoul-mates



THE Korea Tourism Organization (KTO) has hosted a culinary-focused trade trip, in partnership with Korean Air.

The 'Foodie Famil' was held from 03 to 11 May, bringing together a select group of Australian agents to journey through some of South Korea's most iconic and emerging food destinations, such as Seoul, Jeonju, Suncheon, and Yeosu.

Participants enjoyed bibimbap (vegetable mixed rice) and soothing kongnamul gukbap (bean sprout soup) in Jeonju; street food like tteokbokki (spicy rice cakes) and hotteok (sweet pancake) in Seoul; and seafood in Yeosu's coastal markets.

A special part of the trip included a journey into the serene mountain area of Baekyangsa temple, home to the internationally renowned nun Jeong Kwan, widely recognised from Netflix's *Chef's Table*.

She treated the group to a

showcase of temple cuisine, featuring vegan dishes crafted from ingredients grown, brewed, and fermented over months and years within the surrounding mountain range.

The experience concluded with a tea ceremony and a sound healing session. *MS*

Levey's latest tour

GLOBAL Touring has appointed Frank Levey as its Key Account Manager, bringing nearly 30 years of experience in the travel industry to the role.

Levey will be tasked with strengthening Global Touring's independent and home-based agency networks across Australia and internationally, representing the Back-Roads Touring and Topdeck Travel brands.

He has previously worked with brands like Rocky Mountaineer, Cover-More, Queensland Rail Travel, and Insight Vacations.

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Travel Daily

ATIA UPDATE

from Richard Taylor, Director of
Membership and Industry Affairs



MUCH of the nation is working again today following a long weekend, and so I'd like to begin this week's ATIA column by spreading

some truly wholesome travel industry joy.

As you're reading this, NTIA nominations are landing in the inboxes of travel people and businesses across our fair nation.

Let's pause for a moment and appreciate what receiving one of these actually means.

It means that someone - or indeed multiple people, if you are especially popular - have taken the time out of their day to recognise your excellence.

Although there's a lengthy process ahead for the ATIA team as we move onto determining finalists and eventual winners of the awards in Oct, it all starts with those nominations.

In addition to the behemoth that are the NTIAs, in 2024 we introduced the Beyond Borders Travel Summit.

This was a hugely successful addition to the travel calendar, and in 2025 we're upping the

ante by expanding once again.

In addition to Beyond Borders, which will happen in Brisbane in Oct, we're taking Beyond Borders 'on the road' for evening events in Adelaide and Perth at the back end of Jul.

The evenings will feature an update on the current state of the market and trends, discuss the local industry in South Australia and Western Australia respectively, and share insights that have been raised at our recent Pulse meetings.

These evenings are for you, and with the first ticket free for members, I sincerely hope you'll be able to join us.

The only possible downside I can think of is that free tickets aren't tax-deductible, and so you may wish to consider additional tickets at just \$55 plus GST.

That's also the non-member price, and you can [CLICK HERE](#) to get involved.

Can't make these? Then ensure you're in Brisbane for NTIA weekend in Oct.

That's Beyond Borders on the 17th and the awards themselves on the 18th.

More to follow on those, but for now, let's celebrate those nominees and extend our warmest of congratulations.

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MORE LISTENING IS DRIVING LUXURY SALES GROWTH

EXCLUSIVE

SELLING luxury travel experiences has become less about talking and more about listening, as an increasing amount of Aussies request more personalised and unique briefs.

That is the observation of Virtuoso Senior Vice President Michael Londregan, who recently sat down with *Travel Daily* to discuss the changing trends in luxury travel in Australia.

The senior Virtuoso exec said the evolution in luxury needs was noticeable before the pandemic hit, and that the swing towards idiosyncratic itineraries has only gained paced in recent years.

"This evolution has been seen with all luxury goods, not just travel, and has ceased to be



about what luxury experts tell people it is and has started to become 'answer my brief'," Londregan explained.

"In the bad old days of luxury, you would have experts tell [consumers] 'this is the wine you should drink'...and 'if you love your partner, this is where you should have your honeymoon'.

"We were being allowed to advocate and tell people what luxury was, but now it has become more about responding to the individual brief than advising people what we think as

pseudo experts," he added.

Londregan also reflected on the appropriation of the term 'luxury' by the mass market and how Virtuoso delineates its quality services and products.

"There are people who say 'we're in the luxury business' but are really trying to say, 'we sell expensive stuff'.

"Well, that's 1.0 luxury...3.0 is listening to the client and getting them a tailored solution.

"Costco may be the biggest seller of diamonds in America... but the world's best jewellers

don't work there.

"Costco might say they are in the luxury business because they sell a lot of diamonds, but I would say 'you just sell a lot of diamonds'; the luxury end of the business is the jeweller on the corner who listens and says, 'what do you guys want for your engagement ring?'".

Londregan said Virtuoso's continued focus on quality had seen the group increase its revenue by around 28% on the year before, driven in part by inflation, but mainly by productivity gains through advisors selling more product.

"The key for us is to...really stay true to our brand positioning, and not chase volume but chase quality," he concluded. AB

Trisara ups wellness

TRISARA, Phuket's private pool villa resort, has introduced an expanded collection of ecotherapy and wellness offerings for all ages at JARA Spa.

Guests can participate in half-day experiences in nature, which combine fitness with nutrition and pampering, culminating in a full-body massage and a wellness lunch.

Meanwhile, kids can enjoy mini spa treatments, cooking classes, Muay Thai training, scavenger hunts, and more.

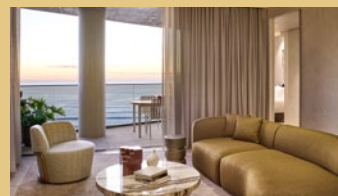
Mondrian brings new levels of luxury to GC

MONDRIAN Gold Coast has officially opened its doors this week, marking the luxury Accor brand's arrival in Australia.

Set along the shores of Burleigh Heads, the 208-room property aims to introduce a new standard of lifestyle luxury to the southern Gold Coast.

Accommodation includes a mix of studios and suites, private beach houses with plunge pools, and the Sky House - a penthouse with panoramic ocean views.

Guests can dine at the property's all-day Italian eatery,



LiTO, which offers woodfired breads, lobster bucatini and coastal aperitivo vibes.

Mondrian Gold Coast also features Haven, a dining and poolside venue serving seasonal produce, live music and agave cocktails, and CIEL Spa, which will offer advanced bio-wellness therapies when it opens 15 Jun.

Tents fit for a Royal

THE Royal Portfolio has launched its first tented camp, welcoming Masiya's Camp as the latest addition to Royal Malewane in the Greater Kruger National Park.

The new sanctuary combines "world-class luxury with the untamed beauty of the African wilderness", featuring six spacious canvas-draped tented suites with floor-to-ceiling views.

Each suite features a private wooden deck with a heated plunge pool, an indoor/outdoor shower, and more.



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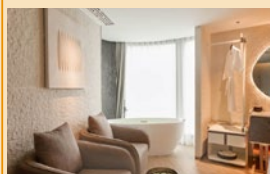
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Bookings are now open for **Novotel Sydney Cabramatta**, which opens this Nov as part of the major transformation of Cabra-Vale Diggers precinct. The property comprises 140 contemporary guestrooms, a resort-style pool, gym, and signature dining. Operated by Signature Hotel Management Group under the Accor brand, guests will enjoy the comfort and service of the Novotel experience along with Accor Live Limitless benefits.



Melia Pattaya Hotel has unveiled its YHI Spa, which combines ancient Asian healing wisdom with modern wellness techniques. The new facility features four treatment rooms and a Thai herbal sauna, with guests able to enjoy an array of health benefits, such as improving metabolism and the nervous and lymphatic systems to ease stress, anxiety, headaches and sleep problems. The treatment menu includes massages, body scrubs and wraps, facials, and more.



Amanoï, a luxury beach resort in Vietnam's Ninh Thuan, has introduced its new Ocean Pool Residence - a secluded private sanctuary spanning 925m². Ideal for families and groups, the fresh accommodation offering features an open kitchen, wine cellar, living room, vast sundeck, swimming pool, and open-air dining area. Guests can use the dedicated spa house, which has a double treatment room, steam room, sauna, Jacuzzi, and more.



A new beachfront venue has arrived at the recently launched **Regent Bali Canggui**, an ultra-luxury resort set on Bali's southwestern coast. With a private pool as its centrepiece, Beach House blends modern coastal cuisine with creative cocktails and laidback vibes. Guests can savour freshly caught seafood and traditional island ingredients, followed by a private surf class.



Azerai Ke Ga Bay, an oceanfront resort in southern Vietnam, has introduced two new activities showcasing local fishing culture. Guests can 'Fish Like a Local', an experience where they will learn from expert guides the technique of casting a large traditional Vietnamese fishing net from the shore. Or, for a more immersive experience, guests can fish from a circular basket boat in the bay.

QT unveils conversion plan



EVT Hotels & Resorts is set to expand its QT brand with the refurbishment and full conversion of the existing 152-room Rydges Lakeside Queenstown hotel.

The transformation will integrate the property into the existing QT Queenstown, consisting of a total of 221 rooms upon completion, the majority featuring guest balconies overlooking Lake Wakatipu.

"Queenstown continues to be one of the best-performing hotel markets in Australasia, and our hotel property is in a prime location on the shores of Lake Wakatipu," EVT Director - Commercial, Mathew Duff said.

"The refurbishment will significantly enhance the asset's value and grow earnings for our shareholders," he added.

The expanded property will also offer meeting and event facilities, food and beverage experiences, a gym, a pool, and facilities to cater for hikers, mountain bikers and skiers/snowboarders.

The new QT rooms will become available in stages throughout 2026, with the overall project due to be completed mid-2027.

The current 69-room QT Queenstown will remain open throughout the upgrade. *JM*

New Rotty Quokkas

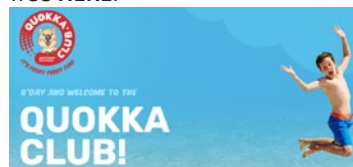
ROTTNEST Express is relaunching its popular free kids travel program in time for the Jul school holidays.

The new iteration of Rottnest Express Quokka Club offers fresh member benefits, including discounts to many on-island restaurants and cafes, free soft serve at Pelican's, as well as a range of free activities, including lawn bowls and arcade games.

Quokka Club 2.0 members also receive a Quokka Club Passport, a complimentary drink and snack on their first journey, and will accumulate stamps with visits, which can redeemed for prizes.

"Rottnest Express proudly supports local families by making travel to Rottnest Island easier, offering free fares all year round for West Australian children under 12 years when they join our Quokka Club," said Niko Peranovic, General Manager of Rottnest Express.

New members can sign up for free **HERE**.





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