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## Explore Kimberley

**SILVERSEA** is inviting travellers to "chase the glow and find the flow" in the Kimberley.

To learn more about the offer, check out the **cover page**.

## Score with Imagine

**IMAGINE** Cruising is highlighting its ultra-luxury, all-inclusive French Polynesia retreat.

There is also an opportunity for agents to score a \$100 gift voucher - see **page nine**.

## Unbound knows no bounds

**ASIAN** small group tour specialist Unbound Travel Group is preparing to expand its reach in the Australian market, launching a new FIT brand called Asia Unbound in the coming weeks.

The operator is most well-known for its India Unbound and Sri Lanka Unbound brands, with the new FIT division to offer tailor-made private touring across 13 Asian destinations, which its website indicates will include Japan, Vietnam, Thailand, South Korea, Bhutan, and Cambodia



among the suite of destinations.

The new product will join a newly relaunched the Remarkable East brand, with Unbound adding five new tours and three new destinations to the mix across Sri Lanka, India, Japan, and Vietnam.

To spearhead the expansion, Unbound Travel Group has brought on board Merrick Abraham (**pictured**) as its new National BDM.

His appointment will kick off with a new trade incentive coming soon, which will provide an opportunity for advisors to join a North India fam in early Sep, visiting Mumbai, Varanasi, Jaipur, Sariska and Delhi.

Abraham was previously Sales Manager for DMC representation company Jones and Co. AB

## HLO shines at OMC

**HELLOWORLD** Travel recently wrapped up its Owner Managers Conference in Vancouver - see all the photos on **page eight**.

### Today's issue of TD

*Travel Daily* today features a cover wrap from **Silversea**, seven pages of news including our **Business Events News** page plus full pages from:

- **Helloworld OMC '25**
- **Imagine Cruising**
- **Emerald River Cruises**

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## MG agent app here

**HOTEL** wholesaler MG has launched an app for its agent loyalty program in Australia, allowing advisors to track earnings in real time and redeem rewards on the spot.

Using the MGFriends app, agents can exchange their earnings for e-gift vouchers from top Australian brands.

The move is part of a push by the Asian company to directly engage Australian travel trade for the first time (**TD 05 May**).

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## TPConnects global

**THE** majority Flight Centre Travel Group-owned TPConnects has launched its international reseller program globally.

Enabling the platform to offer its aggregator tool Iris to travel sellers and retail software Astra to airlines in their local markets, the latest move will look to expand its reach beyond early sales successes achieved in the Middle East and Asia.

TPConnects has already signed Gerry's Travel Group (Pakistan), Al Irtehal Group (Oman), and Maas Travel and Tours (Bangladesh).

"These initial partnerships have demonstrated how our collaborative approach creates value for all parties involved, and we welcome travel organisations worldwide to join our program," said CEO Eric Dumas.

## VA marks historic moment



**VIRGIN** Australia has today returned to long-haul flying, with the first VA-operated service from Sydney to Doha to take off at 2.50pm and land in the Qatari capital at 10.50pm.

The new VA1 will take off on a Boeing 777 wet-leased from partner Qatar Airways, a flight that will unlock access to more than 170 destinations across the QR network via the two carriers' reciprocal codeshare agreement.

VA celebrated the inaugural flight this morning, hosting a special event at Sydney Airport attended by newly-installed CEO Dave Emerson (*TD* 05 Mar), Sydney Airport boss Scott Charlton, and cabin crew members from both airlines.

Speaking ahead of travellers arriving to check in, Emerson said the moment was not just great for Virgin Australia but also for Australian travellers.

"Today marks a really exciting and historical milestone in Virgin Australia's journey," Emerson said.

"Our new service is going to offer more choice, more value and more exciting destinations to

Australian consumers.

"It's not only good for our customers and for Virgin, but it's also great for the Australian economy," Emerson added.

"These new flights are going to generate more than \$3 billion of economic impact for Australia and create hundreds of new jobs across tourism, hospitality and the travel sector."

Travellers in first and business classes on the flight will enjoy one of four new menus curated by Ross Lusted from Sydney's Woodcut restaurant, which rotate every three months (*TD* 06 Jun).

Each focuses on sustainable and seasonal produce, including Kgari spanner crab cakes, lamb osso bucco, and much more.

Virgin Australia is also marking the launch of its new route with a special sale, offering 15% off eligible fares to Doha and selected destinations beyond.

Velocity members booking an eligible VA flight to Doha before 30 Jun, for travel between 01 Oct and 26 May 2026, will also earn a 50% status bonus.

This bonus will contribute to VA's new requirement that at least 50% of status credits be earned on Virgin-operated flights to maintain or upgrade status. *ML*

Emerson is **pictured** above right cutting the ceremonial ribbon with Sydney Airport CEO Scott Charlton and cabin crew.

## Jayco court action

**AUSTRALIA'S** largest caravan and recreational vehicle manufacturer Jayco has been accused of misleading consumers about the off-road capabilities of a number of its vehicle models.

The ACCC has commenced Federal Court proceedings against the company, alleging that since Jan 2020, Jayco engaged in deceptive conduct and made misleading claims by representing that its Outback, All Terrain and CrossTrak RVs were designed for use off road and/or on four-wheel drive (4WD) only tracks.

"We allege Jayco misled consumers by advertising the RVs in terrain in which they were not designed to be used and were not covered by its warranty," the ACCC stated, adding ads should reflect a product's intended use.

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## Ultra-Luxury Cruising

EXPEDITION VOYAGES  
2025-2026

## East Antarctica



### Mawson's Antarctica Along the East Coast

Queenstown > Hobart  
25 Days

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## Emerald on Nine

**EMERALD** River Cruises will be showcasing its Mekong product to Australian travellers this weekend on Nine Network's *Getaway* - details on **page 10**.

### SCENIC°ECLIPSE

## Ultra-Luxury Cruising

EXPEDITION VOYAGES  
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## East Antarctica



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Hobart > Christchurch  
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Thursday 12th June 2025

## Webjet hires first CMO

**THE** company subject to a number of acquisition rumours in recent weeks has appointed its first Chief Marketing Officer.

Oonagh Flanagan (**pictured**) has formally joined Webjet Group, where she will be charged with steering a flagged refresh of the OTA brand (**TD** 21 May), set to launch later this year.

The former senior marketing executive for companies such as Nimble Australia and Crown Resorts will help Webjet achieve its FY30 strategic ambitions, including the rollout of new initiatives across loyalty, digital platforms, and e-commerce.

As stated in its latest financial report, the FY30 strategy will look to double total transaction value and redefine travel experience through digital innovation.

Webjet said that technology will be key to the transformation, and Flanagan's role will focus on harnessing data-driven insights



and advanced marketing to enhance how Webjet currently connects with its customers.

This includes exploring pathways about how AI can help improve marketing efficiency, personalisation, and productivity.

"Webjet has long been a well-loved, homegrown Aussie icon, but it has never felt more energised or ambitious than it does today," Flanagan said.

"This is a business with strong foundations, a bold vision and agenda, and a team that is bursting with ambition.

"I believe the holiday starts the moment you're inspired, and I can't wait to help ignite that spark for Webjet customers." **AB**

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## CATO Summit full

**THE** Council of Australian Tour Operator's Summit is officially sold out, with the event in Sydney today set to offer tips from legal, financial, marketing, tech and insurance experts.

After the conference sessions, CATO's AGM will take place, followed by a members-only dinner and the inaugural CATO Hall of Fame induction.

"The overwhelming response is a clear sign that the industry values content curated and delivered by experts in their field - content that speaks directly to the challenges and opportunities our members face," said CATO Managing Director, Brett Jardine.

## Qantas premium sale

**QANTAS** has discounted 80,000 discounted first, business and premium economy seats across the majority of its network.

The sale closes 18 Jun & applies to travel from Jun to May 2026.

## It's TIME to join us

**PROSPECTIVE** mentors for TIME are being invited to complete an Expression of Interest form, which will be reviewed by the board for approval - view more details about how to get involved **HERE**.

## Aurora unveils 2027

**AURORA** Expeditions has unveiled its Arctic & Beyond 2027 season, featuring 25 voyages across some of the most remote destinations on Earth.

The cruise line will offer departures ranging from eight to 16 days aboard *Greg Mortimer* and *Sylvia Earle*, which will visit Svalbard, Greenland, the Northwest Passage, Scotland, Iceland, Norway, the Faroe Islands, Costa Rica and Panama.

The 2027 program will feature a mix of polar and discovery voyages, new 'Special Edition' itineraries, and dedicated solo cabins across every sailing.

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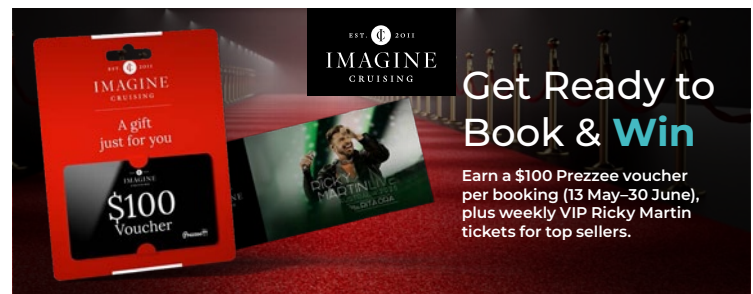
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## Ross to “revolutionise” the travel sector

**1000 Mile Travel Group** co-founder Ben Ross (**pictured**) is preparing to unleash a new business supporting small- to medium-sized travel agencies in Australia, New Zealand and the United States.

Set for launch in Jul, Adamaz will focus on two services: acquiring agencies and helping them transition through the process, as well as offering buying power from two of Australia’s largest consortia.

“We are a stepping stone for agency owners who are seeking a new chapter in their life and business,” Ross explained.

“We understand the dedication and care that goes into building a successful travel agency, and we are committed to preserving their legacy while providing growth opportunities,” he added.

In an Australian-first, in addition to gaining access to air/hotel/car services from the major buying



groups, agencies will also be offered the use of its powerful technology, Ross confirmed.

“This is really exciting for agencies, because we can halve their costs in tech overnight.”

The types of agencies Adamaz is looking to work with are those that are ready to take the next step, but not quite big enough to be sold through the traditional acquisition process.

According to Ross, the new business is set to “revolutionise” the travel industry by addressing a gap in the global market, by providing comprehensive succession planning and growth opportunities for small to mid-sized travel agencies.

“[Agencies will be] dealing with an entrepreneur, you’re not dealing with a big business and that’s what a lot of people are going to find exciting,” Ross said.

“They are not going through a big company with layers of red tape and bureaucracy - you are dealing with one or two entrepreneurs who like to move fast and get things done and get things done quickly.”

Ross also hinted that in Jul, “one of the biggest travel CEOs in Australia and New Zealand” will join him as a partner at Adamaz.

### ET phones Etihad

**ETIHAD** Airways and Ethiopian Airlines have started a strategic codeshare partnership that will unlock new connections for fliers.

The codeshare will see Etihad introduce daily flights to Addis Ababa from 08 Oct, and ET start services to Abu Dhabi from Jul.

### Air NZ boosts US

**AIR** New Zealand is boosting its long-haul travel with more premium seats to North America this summer.

The carrier will operate 8% more seats to the United States and Canada from Oct to Mar.

### Book Hawaii and win

**INFINITY** Holidays and Hawaii Tourism Oceania have unveiled a new campaign called ‘Aloha Always’, which aims to encourage cultural engagement and meaningful moments that go beyond the beach.

As part of the launch, Infinity has also released a range of exclusive agent-bookable packages to immerse travellers in authentic Hawaiian culture.

Agents also have the chance to win a three-day car hire and three-night stay at Outrigger.

To go in the draw, book eligible campaign products between 09-31 Jul - see **HERE** for more.

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## Window Seat

**WHILE** Virgin Australia celebrated a new route today (see **page two**) by flying another carrier's plane to a new destination, another airline has literally tipped its hat to the carrier by overloading an ex-Virgin Boeing 737-800 (**pictured**).

Still largely painted in VA livery, the GetJet Airlines plane - operating for Wizz Air - was unloading in Haugesund, Norway, yesterday, when the incident occurred.

Despite passengers disembarking at the time, no injuries were recorded and there was no serious damage.

According to Airport Operations Manager Jan Ove Solstrand, "too many kilograms in the tail" caused the incident.



## Regent goes large

**REGENT** Seven Seas Cruises has unveiled the Skyview Regent Suite, a 817m<sup>2</sup> room sitting atop the brand's newest ship *Seven Seas Prestige* (**TD** 14 May).

The two-level suite starts at \$40,000 per night - more details in today's issue of **Cruise Weekly**.

## NRL kicks off Vegas deals

**DIRECT** charter flights for the 2026 NRL Telstra Premiership season in Las Vegas next year are now on offer.

Rugby league will be making its return to Allegiant Stadium in Las Vegas next year on 28 Feb for the season kick-off, with several packages open for booking.

Four dedicated Qantas charter flights are on offer (ex Brisbane and Sydney), with packages starting from \$4,699 per person twin-share.

These include game tickets (with an option to upgrade into Club Supporter Bay), five nights' accommodation, airport transfers, and an exclusive Rugby League Vegas merchandise pack.

Limited seats are also available for club-themed charters.

Guests can choose from several travel package options starting from \$849 per person,

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ranging from three to five nights' accommodation, including a Rugby League Las Vegas event ticket and a merchandise item.

League fans will have the chance to watch the Canterbury-Bankstown Bulldogs take on the St. George Illawarra Dragons, and the Newcastle Knights go head-to-head with the North Queensland Cowboys.

The Super League will also be hitting Vegas, with Hull KR playing against Leeds Rhinos.

For more details, see **HERE**. *JHM*

## LA links MEL daily

**LATAM** Airlines will increase its direct service from Melbourne to Santiago to a daily operation from Dec, adding an extra 1,800 seats per week to the route.

The increase marks the first time Melbourne has enjoyed a daily link to South America.

"Today's announcement by LATAM is a further sign of confidence in Victoria and the increase in services will provide benefits to people on both sides of the Pacific for holidays," said MEL Chief Executive Lorie Argus.

## It comes together

**CUNARD** has partnered with Abbey Road Studios to unveil an exclusive Listening Lounge experience for guests to enjoy on board *Queen Elizabeth*.

The one-hour experience will be hosted in the Commodore Club, featuring curated playlists from Abbey Road's rich recording archives including The Beatles, Ed Sheeran, and Gregory Porter.

## Imagine the feeling

**IMAGINE** Cruising has announced the winning travel advisors in the first month of its rebrand incentive.

The winners were: Paula Martin, Helloworld Gosford in NSW; Megan Walsh, MTA Travel in WA; Lydia Xu, Phil Hoffmann Travel in SA; and Shelley Edwards, Helloworld St Heliers in Auckland.

Each agent scored a \$100 Preezzee voucher for every booking and two VIP tickets to see Ricky Martin live in concert with special guest, Rita Ora.

## Two New Tours to the Balkans

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\*Entries close 13 June 2025.



## Becker on ABEA

**THE** Australian Business Events Association (ABEA) has appointed Angie Becker from Victorian Convention and Event Trust (VCET) to its board, effective immediately.

Becker has taken up the venue representative position recently vacated by Samantha Glass of ICC Sydney (**TD** 14 Mar).

Currently serving as Chief Sales and Customer Experience Officer overseeing Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre and Nyaal Banyul Geelong Convention and Event Centre, Becker brings over two decades of experience in hotels, hospitality and events.

Two positions on the ABEA board are now up for renomination prior to the AGM in Nov.

## BCEC MARKS 30 YEARS OF EVENTS

**BRISBANE** Convention & Exhibition Centre (BCEC) is this week celebrating three decades of serving the meetings and events industry.

During its 30 years of operations, the ASM Global managed venue has welcomed 21.6 million guests, delivered 26,082 events for Brisbane, and generated \$6.26 billion in economic benefit for Queensland.

The milestone was celebrated with a gala dinner held in BCEC's Plaza Ballroom, with Bob O'Keefe, the former General Manager and now the centre's Chief Executive Officer, and Kym Guesdon (**pictured**), the current General Manager, both giving speeches on the night.

"From the very beginning, our vision was to create a centre that would drive growth, spark ideas, and put Brisbane on the world stage," said O'Keefe.



"Thirty years on, I'm incredibly proud of what we've achieved together as BCEC stands as a powerful symbol of that vision, continuing to create opportunity and shape the future of our state."

Since opening on Queensland Day in 1995, BCEC has become most awarded convention centre in Australia, with 198 accolades.

Looking to the future, Guesdon told attendees, "We remain committed to creating meaningful

economic and social impacts for our city through strategic partnerships, and we have been working closely through our Advocates program and with the Queensland Government and our universities on areas critical for research and innovation.

"While attracting international conventions can be difficult, I believe it is an indicator of the level of innovation that is taking place in the city," she added. *JM*

## Vivid 2025 takes off

**VISITOR** numbers during the first week of Vivid Sydney 2025 were up around 10% on last year, with more than 1.2 million people attending the festival.

The first two Saturdays attracted bumper crowds, with almost 200,000 people per night flocking to the city to experience the free Vivid Light Walk.

A record-breaking 51,169 diners were recorded in restaurants on Sat 24 May - the highest number ever in the event's history, up 45% from 2024.

## Orange appeal grows with new venue

**MAYFIELD** Vineyard, a premier event destination in Orange, NSW, has announced the opening of a brand-new events space.

Set amid rolling vineyards, The Grove (**pictured**) offers a contemporary countryside setting, with a capacity of 150 seated and 180 cocktail guests.

The new venue complements the estate's School House Venue and historic homestead.

"Whether it is a wedding,



milestone celebration, or corporate retreat, our guests now have the flexibility to host events across several unique, picturesque settings within one estate," said Mayfield Vineyard's owner, Rebecca Eastham.

## Taking a stand

**BETTER** Stands reusable stands framework is now open to the global events industry, driving the transition from single-use to reusable stands.

Hosted by Net Zero Carbon Events, the initiative encourages best practices that enable reusable stands to deliver cost savings, greater efficiency and make stands more sustainable.

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**Swan Hellenic** has appointed **Carlos Garzon** to the role of Vice President of Global Sales - a position created in response to the cruise line's rapidly growing sales. Garzon brings 20 years' experience in top roles at luxury cruise leaders such as Norwegian Cruise Line, Regent Seven Seas, Vantage Deluxe, Atlas Ocean Voyages and SeaDream Yacht Club. Swan Hellenic said Garzon has been tasked with powering the next phase of its growth.

As the company prepares for its next growth phase, global foreign currency brand **Travellex** has appointed **Asokan Sathurayar** to drive its omni-channel growth strategy as Retail Director Australia and New Zealand. Sathurayar brings two decades of retail experience to his new role, most recently with Dusk Australasia.

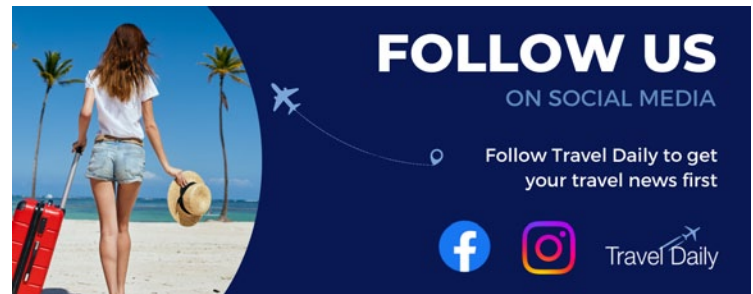
**Seabourn Cruise Line** has welcomed **Belinda Layt** as its new Key Account Manager for Queensland and Victoria, commencing this week. Layt joins from the New York-based ID Travel Group, where she was Associate Director, Asia Pacific, for two-and-a-half years. Before that, she was an independent affiliate of Savenio in the luxury retail travel space for nearly five years.

**Global Touring** has appointed **Frank Levey** as its new Key Account Manager to represent both Back-Roads Touring and Topdeck Travel. Backed by nearly 30 years of industry experience, Levey brings extensive relationships with the trade and will focus primarily on strengthening the company's home-based channels across all markets.

**Hornblower Group** has selected **Shull Autin** as its new Chief Maritime Officer. He boasts more than 30 years of maritime experience spanning marine logistics, offshore operations, safety, and environmental compliance, most recently serving as a consultant and managing member of Magnolia Logistics Services. Autin will oversee all maritime operations across Hornblower Group, as well as play a critical role in advancing key strategic initiatives, optimising fleet performance, and strengthening high-profile partnerships.

**The Australian Tourism Export Council** has welcomed **Merrin Ozols** as its new National Executive - Industry Development and Capability. As the former Executive Officer at Fleurieu Peninsula Tourism, Ozols formed strategic partnerships to support over 2,000 local businesses to engage with domestic and international markets. She brings extensive experience in destination marketing and visitor strategy and will work to help members connect and grow in their marketing efforts.

Bringing over a decade in finance across several industries, **Rosie Bilton** will now apply her skills with **The Luxury Travel Collection** as its new Finance Business Partner. Bilton moves to the luxury network from her most recent role with The Star Entertainment Group.



## Aman moves on Caribbean



**AMAN** Group has announced its first hotel in the Americas, Janu Turks & Caicos, a tropical escape on the shore of British territory Providenciales, with more projects to come in the region from the hotelier.

Currently under construction (render **pictured**), the hotel and residences are located on an 18,000-acre nature reserve, bordering the beaches and coves of Northwest Point Marine National Park.

The property will also feature a beach club, restaurants, a 50-metre swimming pool and spa and wellness centre, which will include an IV lounge, meditation studio and apothecary bar.

The residence will be located on the beach with jungle landscape behind, giving guests privileged access to the resort's amenities and experiences.

This is Janu's fifth destination, following the success of Janu Tokyo, which opened at the end of last year.

In addition to Janu Turks and Caicos, 11 other destinations are

in the pipeline from the brand, including Janu Dubai, which is under construction, and Janu Diriyah and Janu AlUla. *JHM*

## UA Starlink issues

**UNITED** Airlines has cut off Starlink connectivity from its fleet of Embraer E175 aircraft after a cockpit glitch.

The now-disabled Starlink connection was causing radio static in pilots' communication with air traffic control.

## Mudgee change up

**MUDGE** Region Tourism has appointed we scout as its agency overseeing PR strategy, brand storytelling, media and influencer relations, and event activations.

The tourism organisation is also changing its structure, which will see the launch of the Destination Experience Department under the Mid-Western Regional Council, a move designed to ensure improved alignment between tourism initiatives and regional priorities.

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