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## EY to reveal Rex suitors

**REX** Airlines administrator **EY** is expected to this week reveal a shortlist of suitable bidders for the besieged carrier.

The airline is running out of time to find a buyer, with the Federal Government previously giving **EY** the deadline of 30 Jun to gather interest from 'serious' suitors, at which time it will consider purchasing **Rex** itself (**TD** 12 Feb) if no viable candidates are sourced.

One of the potential acquirers floated is Renaissance Partners, which has purchased the branding to resurrect the Trans Australian Airlines brand in line



with a bid to buy **Rex**, according to *Australian Aviation*.

However, subsequent reporting by *The Australian* has suggested the Sydney-based venture capital firm has already been ruled out by **EY**, which if true, would put paid to its proposal to relocate **Rex** from Sydney to Canberra.

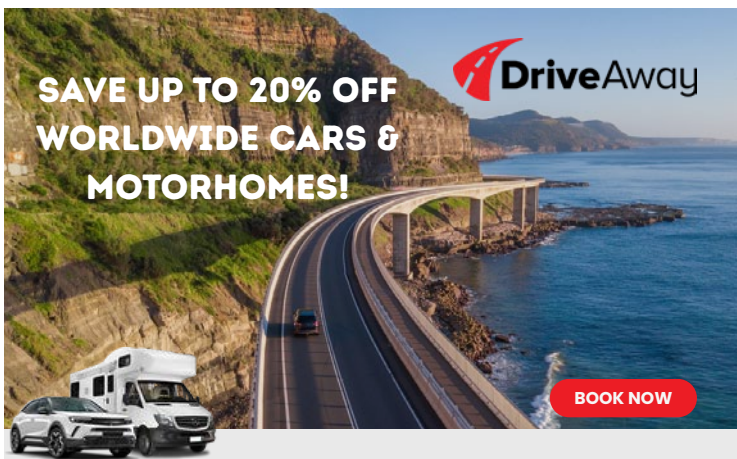
Renaissance's plan would also see creditors asked to take shares in the airline in lieu of repayment for the first three years, while the fleet of ageing Saab 340s would be maintained for another 10 years before being phased out with electric aircraft.

Other parties reportedly interested in acquiring **Rex** include Anchorage Capital Partners (**TD** 11 June), and WA regional airline **Nexus**. **AB**

### Today's issue of TD

*Travel Daily* today features a cover wrap from **Room-Res**, seven pages of news, including our **Sustainability** page, plus a product profile from **Inspiring Vacations** and a full pages from **World Aviation**.

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## Get rewarded now

**AGENTS** can earn incentives on every ticket they sell with Ethiopian Airlines - see **page 8**.

## Don't forget Japan

**INSPIRING Vacations** is showcasing its 'Unforgettable Japan' tour - details on **page 9**.



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## THL fields takeover offer from within

A CONSORTIUM comprised of BGH Capital and the Trouchet Family have lodged a non-binding offer valued at \$471 million to acquire all shares in global motorhome rental brand, Tourism Holdings Limited (THL).

An all-cash offer of NZ\$2.30 (A\$2.13) a share has been tabled to shareholders by the alliance, of which one member, Luke Trouchet, is already an Executive Director at THL and founder of the Apollo campervan business.

The takeover offer is subject to due diligence, finalisation of debt arrangements, and approval by internal BGH investment committees.

It is also contingent on THL recommending the takeover or scheme of arrangement to existing shareholders, pending an independent share valuation.

THL has now appointed a Board Subcommittee to consider the proposal, and external



financial and legal advisors, while Trouchet has taken leave from his executive duties with THL and will not play a role in the company's consideration of the offer.

The consortium said it is also open to acquiring a controlling interest in the company without necessarily acquiring all shares.

BGH's offer follows an on-market share purchase of 19.99% in THL, which was acquired from major corporations including ANZ Bank New Zealand, and Accident Compensation Corporation (ACC).

Both ANZ and ACC remain substantial shareholders in THL following the partial sale.

Recent months has seen THL

struggle in its core motorhome businesses including local brands Apollo, Maui and Britz.

The company's Canadian brands have also flagged concerns on the importation of parts and export of vehicles to the US on the back of President Donald Trump's sweeping 25% tariffs on Canadian-made goods.

"THL's board and management are very aware of THL's recent performance, which has been largely influenced by factors beyond the company's control, such as the impact of poor consumer confidence on the demand for recreational vehicles and recent geopolitical and tariff developments impacting travel sentiment," the company said.

"The Board will act in what it considers to be the best interests of the company," THL said.

Interestingly, BGH Capital made a play to purchase Webjet last month (TD 14 May). ML

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**CHICAGO**

**TD is coming to you from IPW in Chicago, where America's largest inbound tourism conference is taking place.**

THE showroom floor is open and the conference and expo have begun, with Brand USA President and CEO Fred Dixon welcoming media at the opening press briefing this morning.

To a packed room, he announced a new tourism campaign and suggested "America is ready".

TD will also attend the media marketplace before gathering for a traditional luncheon.

Rounding out the day, Choose Chicago will host Magnificent Mile Monday - an evening showcasing the best of Chicago's neighbourhood.



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## Window Seat

A **CHAIR** crafted by artist Nicola Bolla has been destroyed by a careless tourist at the Verona's Palazzo Maffei Museum in Italy.

The man was caught on CCTV sitting on the dainty installation - despite the Van Gogh chair clearly being marked as an exhibit - all in the pursuit of a silly selfie.

"Disrespectful behaviour has put the integrity of a work of art at risk...which was damaged by visitors," the museum said on Instagram.



## America is ready to challenge headwinds

"**AMERICA** is ready" - that is the warcry of Brand USA President and CEO Fred Dixon as he launched arguably one of the most important brand campaigns for US tourism in the recent past, 'America the Beautiful'.

At a time where visitation to the US is facing multiple challenges, Dixon, who has spent nearly a year in his role, took the opportunity to impress upon the crowd that the country is set up to welcome tourists, suggesting "the story of what's new across the USA is a powerful one".

He acknowledged that "to build on the momentum, we must meet the moment and continue to inspire travellers in ways that resonate deeply".

Dixon believes the "bold and new" tourism campaign, named after the nation's unofficial anthem of the same name, "rises above the noise" and leverages the key selling point of human-to-



human connection.

The global push launches in Aug, and will showcase the best of the United States and drive international inbound travel.

"As we set our sights on 2026 and beyond, we are proud to announce 'America the Beautiful' - a bold and unprecedented tourism campaign," Dixon said.

"With this campaign, we are sending a clear message: the USA is open...and ready to welcome legitimate international travellers.

"We're confident this effort will spark renewed interest and deepen connections with audiences around the world."

The campaign is supported by a dedicated digital hub, [AmericaTheBeautiful.com](https://AmericaTheBeautiful.com), which leverages artificial intelligence

in partnership with Mindtrip to personalise and enhance the traveller's journey.

Brand USA labelled it a step toward a more intuitive, data-informed approach, allowing the organisation to better understand what inspires global audiences to deliver tailored experiences that move them to action.

For more details from the ground at IPW, see **page five**. *DF*

## Complex adds Mel

**THE** expansion of Complex Travel Group continues to gain speed, with the business and Link Travel member opening its third office in Melbourne this week.

"As we are approaching nearly 70 staff, opening in another state started to make a lot of sense to cater to our growth plans," Director Mark Trim said, adding the initial team of three will be expanded in the months ahead.

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## Newy gets cruise boost

**REGIONAL** NSW is set to enjoy a growth in cruise tourism with the launch of a three-year partnership to enhance cruise visitor experiences, led by the Port Authority of NSW.

Seven councils and two peak tourism bodies from the Hunter and Central Coast met last week to sign a landmark Memorandum of Understanding that aims to unlock new opportunities for local businesses to benefit from the cruise industry.

A key outcome from the agreement is joint funding for a part-time cruise coordinator, who will work with cruise lines to expand their itineraries so that their passengers can experience best of the Hunter and Central Coast regions.

"This partnership is about more than just welcoming cruise ships," said Port Authority of NSW CEO, John McKenna.



"It's about showcasing the incredible experiences the regions have to offer - from the natural beauty of the Central Coast and the Hunter Valley's world-class wine country to the vibrant energy of Newcastle itself.

"It's a win-win: passengers get unforgettable experiences, and local businesses and communities benefit from the economic opportunities that come with a thriving cruise industry," McKenna added.

The Port Authority of NSW will draw on expertise from similar successful arrangements such as at the Port of Eden. JM



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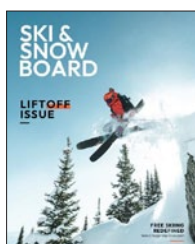
#### Vacations & Travel

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#### Ski & Snowboard

Operating for over 19 years: originally launched as Ski & Snowboard with Kids, expanded in 2025 to serve the wider snow travel market. Editorial focus: Global ski destinations, gear reviews and expert advice.

For confidential discussions and further information, please contact Tom Green.  
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## Int'l Rail is on point

**INTERNATIONAL** Rail has launched online bookings for point-to-point tickets on Japan's most popular rail routes.

The shift from the previous email-based booking system allows agents in Australia and NZ to secure tickets at a lower price, while also earning commission on online transactions and enjoying a more seamless and efficient booking process.

The update complements International Rail's existing Japan Rail Passes and Japan transport passes and bus services from Nagoya to Hakuba, providing travel agents with a full suite of booking options.

## AAT gets smaller

**AAT** Kings has launched a new range of small group tours across Australia and New Zealand, limited to groups of up to 24 guests per departure, available to book from Jul.

Designed to provide a more intimate and personalised experience for travellers, the new collection will kick off from Sep in South Australia with in-depth experiences, including 'Remarkable Adelaide to Kangaroo Island'.

A selection of small group departures will also be available on 2025/26 'Perfect Tasmania' and New Zealand's 'Southern Spirit' tours.

The full suite of small group products will then roll out across AAT Kings' 2026/27 season, expanding to encompass destinations like the Northern Territory and Western Australia.

"Our new Small Group Tour offering is designed for those seeking a real connection with each destination they visit, while offering an intimate and immersive tour experience," said AAT Kings Group CEO, Ben Hall.

To celebrate the launch, AAT Kings is offering savings of up to \$2,000 per couple on select small group tours booked by 08 Jul.

## The Paradox debuts

**RADISSON** Blu Plaza Sydney will rebrand to Paradox Sydney from next month.

The revamp marks the Australian debut of Paradox Hotels & Resorts, which will be located at the O'Connell Street address in Sydney's downtown.

The hotel will undergo a phased refresh in the coming months to fully integrate the new property's brand identity.

Paradox Sydney joins a global portfolio of hotels in five countries, including Canada, Singapore, China, and Thailand.

"To debut in Australia at such a historic and meaningful heritage address is a major milestone for us," said Tiah Joo Kin, Chief Executive Officer of Paradox parent company TA Global.



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## Stretching for change

**INTREPID** Travel has revealed its Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP), marking the next step in the B-Corp certified company's commitment to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

The roadmap will guide the company through to 2027, building on the foundations of its previous Reflect (2019) and Innovate (2021) RAPs.

The Stretch RAP emphasises First Nations employment, procurement, and truth-telling, and represents a shift from awareness-raising to long-term, systemic action.

"As an Australian founded and headquartered business, we recognise that reconciliation is vital to building a stronger and more equitable country," Intrepid Travel CEO James Thornton (pictured) said.

Key commitments under the new RAP include working with more First Nations-owned businesses; supporting career pathways; and fostering cultural understanding through truth-telling about Australia's history.

Intrepid will also roll out new tools for engagement, including on-Country learning experiences, refreshed Acknowledgement of Country guidance, & celebrating reconciliation champions.



## Dixon defends Brand USA

**PRESIDENT** and CEO of Brand USA Fred Dixon has thanked the industry for its support in the face of reports of significant budget cuts to the tourism agency under the Trump Administration's cost-cutting measures (**TD** 10 Jul).

With cuts of up to US\$80 million from its US\$100 million budget touted, Dixon took the opportunity at the opening media address of the annual conference to point out the positives that Brand USA provides the country.

"We are proud to be part of what is a US\$2.9 trillion economic force," Dixon said.

"Travel and tourism industry's economic impact supports 15 million American jobs, and international travel, of course, is the most lucrative segment, with travellers from outside the US spending nearly US\$700 million each and every day in this country," he added.

Dixon noted that while arrival numbers have fluctuated over the past few months, studies have shown that intent to visit remains very strong, and the USA continues to be the most aspirational long-haul destination.

"In this context, the work of Brand USA has never been more important, especially with the wealth of new product, experiences and events that are on offer," he said.

In fiscal year 2024, which carried a record budget, brand-new sales and marketing efforts were able to generate 1.6 million incremental visitors.



Those visitors contributed around US\$6 billion in direct spend, and nearly US\$13 billion in total economic impact.

That additional cash injection supported nearly 80,000 jobs.

"Put into historical context over the past 12 years, including the COVID period...marketing efforts...had a cumulative impact of US\$76 billion - results like this illustrate our positive impact and show just how important Brand USA is for the industry and US economy," Dixon concluded.

Before moving on to other topics, he shared that "we are engaged in an unprecedented level of dialogue with every level of government, including the White House - all of this gives us confidence that we will deliver well into the future". **DF**

## Win a Quark voyage

**TWO** weeks remain for advisors to enter Quark Expedition's 'Summer in the Arctic Sweepstakes' for the chance to explore Norway during the midnight sun.

The six lucky winners will each receive a free cabin aboard the 'Svalbard Explorer: Best of High Arctic Norway' expedition.

See the full details visit **HERE**.

## North India famil

**REGISTRATIONS** for Unbound Travel Group's North India travel advisor famil are now open.

Guests will explore key destinations and experience Unbound's unique touring style on the 10-day famil.

The itinerary departs 30 Aug, travelling from Mumbai to New Delhi, with highlights including the Taj Mahal and Varanasi.

## SIA extends lifeline

**SINGAPORE** Airlines Group is offering roles for Jetstar Asia staff impacted by the closure of the carrier, which was announced by Qantas last week (**TD** 11 Jun).

Roles will be offered to around 100 pilots and 200 cabin crew members affected by Qantas' restructure of Asian operations, while the Aussie carrier has also promised to find job placements for Jetstar Asia team members.

"We understand that this is a time of uncertainty, and are committed to providing the necessary support to help make the recruitment and onboarding process as smooth as possible," said an SIA spokesperson.

## Anne wild for CC

**ANNE** Wild & Associates (AWA) has won the Destination Central Coast PR and marketing communications account.

AWA will now be tasked with promoting the Central Coast's beaches, waterways, lush wilderness, foodie scene, art trails, and more.

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## NCLH efficiency

**NORWEGIAN** Cruise Line Holdings (NCLH) has managed to reduce its fuel consumption by 24% from 2008 to 2024 on the back of ongoing investments in systems and technology.

The figure was revealed in the line's recent 2024 *Sail and Sustain Report* as part of a look into efficiencies gained through its shipboard energy efficiency management plan.

The line was also able to cut fuel use in its boilers by 42% from a 2016 baseline through waste heat recovered from its engine cooling systems.

Further efficiencies were achieved through expanding biocide-free antifouling on *Norwegian Star*, after testing on *Seven Seas Explorer* found a 3% reduction in water friction on the propellers.

Another eight ships across the NCLH fleet were also fitted with upgraded HVAC systems, which delivered 80% energy savings on like-for-like voyages.

Retrofitting of LED lighting to reduce GHG intensity was completed on four ships, with a further six to undergo upgrades in 2025.

NCLH said it also plans to see efficiency improvements through modifications to itinerary planning through its ongoing partnership with Wartsila Voyage Services.

## GREEN INVESTMENT CALLS GET LOUDER

**HURTIGRUTEN** Chief Executive Officer Hedda Felin has called for stronger collaboration on financing between the public and private sector and greater emphasis on emission-reducing initiatives in the maritime sector.

Felin was a keynote presenter at Nor-Shipping 2025 in Oslo, an environmental showcase that attracts environmental leaders, ministers and investors from around the world.

Among the attendees was Australian mining identity and eco-investor Andrew 'Twiggy' Forrest, who recently unveiled a plan to partner with countries on enhancing marine protection zones to combat illegal fishing.

Highlights of Felin's presentation included progress already being made by Hurtigruten to reduce its carbon footprint including hybrid propulsion conversions and other



existing technologies.

The eco-leader also touched on the overall sustainable growth of Norway's tourism sector, along with the challenges of securing a more sustainable maritime future.

"We operate in a highly polluting sector, which is why we're committed to driving real change and greater environmental accountability," Felin said.

Felin's presentation coincided with a keynote by Australian Federal Environment and Water Minister, Murray Watt, at the UN

Ocean Conference in France.

Minister Watt reaffirmed Australia's intention to endorse and ratify the High Seas Biodiversity Treaty and work to enhance marine park protection.

Both Norway and Australia have emerged as leading players in ocean conservation, with both countries' vision aligning with Hurtigruten's push for greater action in the maritime sector.

"We don't have time for vague promises - at Hurtigruten, we're acting now," Felin said. *ML*

## MGallery skin line

**A NEW** line of eco-friendly skincare products has been launched by Accor's boutique MGallery hotel brand.

Developed in partnership with natural skincare brand Typology, the line features five products - a shower gel, shampoo, conditioner, hand soap and body lotion.

The range is now available for guests to purchase at over 30 MGallery properties around the world.

## Reflections on a renewed EV charge

**FUNDING** from the NSW Department of Climate Change has helped Reflections Holiday Parks install 28 electric vehicle (EV) chargers at eight of its properties across the state.

Schneider Electric EV chargers can now be found at Reflections properties in Ferry Reserve; Evans Head; Lennox Head; Coffs Harbour; Bonny Hills; Tuncurry; Eden; and Bermagui.

The EV chargers follow a suite of sustainability changes

made by Reflections across its network, including installation of solar panels at eight parks.

The company has also added 43 smart water meters at 25 of its parks to help manage mains water usage.

A Revolving Sustainability Fund has also been established with an initial investment of \$2.1 million towards future programs to reduce energy use and build on \$650,000 in savings realised last financial year.

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## MONEY

**WELCOME** to Money, TD's Tue feature on what the Australian dollar is doing.

**AU\$1 = US\$0.652**

**THE** Australian dollar has managed to gain ground against some of its major opponents, despite the ramping up of conflict in the Middle East.

In fact, the AUD/USD rose past the 0.65 cents mark and hit new yearly highs yesterday.

Meanwhile, a new survey from [TravellInsurance.com.au](https://www.travellinsurance.com.au) found that more than half of Australians (56%) intend to put some or all of their FY25 tax return towards an overseas trip.

Japan and Europe are the top destinations for those heading abroad with their tax dollars.

Most respondents said they will use a portion of their tax returns for spending money, tours, and experiences, while savings have already covered flights, accommodation and travel insurance.

"Many Australians see their tax refund as an opportunity to book a holiday they might not otherwise afford," said [TravellInsurance.com.au](https://www.travellinsurance.com.au) CEO, Shaun McGowan.

*Wholesale rates this morning.*

|              |           |
|--------------|-----------|
| US           | \$0.652   |
| UK           | £0.480    |
| NZ           | \$1.076   |
| Euro         | €0.564    |
| Japan        | ¥94.29    |
| Thailand     | ฿21.16    |
| China        | ¥4.679    |
| South Africa | ¥11.60    |
| Canada       | \$0.885   |
| Crude oil    | US\$68.79 |

## Sabi Sabi on a sell sell charge



**SOUTH** Africa's Sabi Sabi Collection last week wrapped up a regional sales trip designed to strengthen trade relationships and showcase the luxury safari brand's latest product updates.

Over the week, Sabi Sabi Collection Trade Relations Manager Juan Nel visited agents and specialist Africa wholesalers in Brisbane, Sydney, Melbourne, Perth and Auckland.

Nel was the guest of honour as the company's representative partner in Australia and New Zealand, Ynot Concepts, hosted one of many events as part of the sales trip, including at QT Sydney, where Nel thanked agents for their ongoing sales support.

"As Sabi Sabi's second-largest international market, the appetite for African travel continues to grow and we are excited to share our stories and plans with these important partners," Nel said.

Key messaging included the group's 2024 rebrand from Sabi Sabi Private Game Reserve to new luxury additions to the portfolio, including Sandringham Private Game Reserve, which opens to guests next year.

The former hunting lodge has been transformed into a wildlife conservation hub, with luxury safari accommodation due to be developed on the site.

Sabi Sabi Collection will also expand to Cape Town, with the opening of The Claremont boutique hotel due in Sep. *ML*

Nel is **pictured** above front left with Ynot Concepts Chief Executive Officer Rob Gurr and trade partners in Brisbane.

## New Tassie program

**TOURISM** Tasmania has launched its Trade Connect Program, offering international trade-ready operators a 50% discount on attendance fees for select Tourism Australia Marketplace events this year.

These include Marketplace events in India in Aug, the United States in Sep, and China in Nov.

Participants will promote tourism offerings to retail travel agents, wholesalers and inbound tour operators, with applications for Marketplace USA and Marketplace China open until 20 Jun and 04 Jul, respectively.

## Airbnb houses FIFA

**A RANGE** of unique football-related travel experiences will be available from Airbnb as part of a major new partnership signed with football governing body FIFA.

As the official alternative accommodations and experiences booking platform, the tie-up will cover three tournaments - the Club World Cup now underway, the 2026 FIFA World Cup in North America, and the 2027 FIFA Women's World Cup, to be hosted in Brazil.

Airbnb users will be able to book unique experiences such as a training session with former US goalkeeper, Tim Howard.

The accommodation platform will also establish a US\$5 million Host City Impact Program to help fund community programs and football-related activities.

Around 380,000 travellers will book an Airbnb during the 2026 FIFA World Cup, hosted by the US, Canada and Mexico.

## Vietjet heats up

**VIETJET** has announced a week-long sale for Aussies planning a summer escape to Vietnam or beyond between 11 Aug 2025 and 28 Mar 2026.

From now until 5am AEST on 23 Jun, Vietjet is offering millions of discounted fares from \$199 across its six direct services linking Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, and Perth with Ho Chi Minh City and Sydney and Melbourne with Hanoi.

As part of the sale, travellers can also enjoy 50% off hot inflight meals when pre-ordered and 20kg of free checked baggage for eco-class passengers flying internationally to/from Vietnam.





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