



## Dreaming of NZ?

**EXPLORE** New Zealand on your dream self-famil - head to **page 10** for more information.

## BTTB25 has arrived

**THE** 25th annual BTTB travel conference, gala dinner, and awards is here - more on **page 12**.

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## Kiwis travelling farther

**A NEW** report from Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA) has confirmed Kiwis are increasingly electing to cruise in long-haul destinations amid a decline in local ship deployments.

The industry body's *Source Market Report for New Zealand* showed around two-thirds of Kiwis (52,500 people) sailed within Australia, NZ and the South Pacific last year.

However, the historically strong region for Kiwis was down on 2023 volumes, which saw roughly

three-quarters (77%) of the country's citizens sail locally.

The shifting appetite coincides with Kiwis flying farther afield to board ships, with long-haul cruise holidays increasing by close to 40% to 27,700 in 2024, up from 23.1% in 2023.

"While global cruise figures are at record levels, New Zealand has been impacted by reduced local deployment due to regulatory challenges and rising costs faced by cruise lines locally," CLIA Australasia MD Joel Katz said.

"The data suggests Kiwi cruise fans will opt to sail elsewhere if their choices at home are reduced," he added.

Katz also called on government and industry stakeholders to combine efforts to address regulatory difficulties and high fees that are disincentivising cruise ship deployments across the Tasman. **AB**

## Bali flights cancelled

**A VOLCANIC** eruption in eastern Indonesia has prompted the cancellation of around two dozen flights in and out of Bali (**TD** breaking news).

Virgin Australia, Jetstar and Air New Zealand services are among those scrapped after a huge ash cloud erupted from Mount Lewotobi Laki-Laki at around 5.30pm Tue (Indonesia time) on the tourist island of Flores.

Authorities have now put a 7km exclusion zone in place.

## Today's issue of TD

*Travel Daily* today features nine pages of travel industry news, including our **Luxury page**, plus a product profile from **City of Gold Coast** and full pages from:

- **Tourism New Zealand**
- **Helloworld United**
- **btTB**

## Laos hostel outrage

**THE** hostel that served deadly methanol drinks to two Australian teenagers is planning to open again under a new name.

Bianca Jones and Holly Bowles both died as a result of consuming beverages at the Nana Backpacker Hostel in Laos (**TD** 25 Mar), with the business now accepting bookings under the name Vang Vieng Central Backpacker Hostel before a planned reopening.

The girls' parent have expressed their dismay at the decision.

## Win your way to LA

**WIN** your way to the ultimate Los Angeles famil - more details on the competition on **page 11**.

## Get green with GC

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## The US must flip script on perception

**THE** United States has a perception problem and needs to turn it around rapidly so it does not waste a "rare opportunity".

That is the opinion of US Travel Association's President and CEO Geoff Freeman (**pictured**), who during a lunch break at IPW in Chicago, appealed to the delegates to work as one to ensure tourists have a seamless and memorable experience.

Freeman said that with some of the biggest events in the world being hosted by the country over the next few years, the United States may not get a second chance at a first impression.

"Desire is not enough," he said, adding that being a top travel destination is something the country must earn every day - especially in the present moment.

"The question ahead isn't whether people want to come, they do, the question is whether we...are ready and are doing



everything we can to deliver the experiences travellers deserve, because the world is watching.

"The 2026 FIFA World Cup, America's 250th birthday, the 2028 Summer Olympics in Los Angeles, these events will test our wings, our coordination and our ambition - we don't get a second chance to make a first impression," Freeman added.

The United States has to also admit there were challenges to overcome, he warned.

"It is no secret in some parts of the world there is a growing perception that the United States might be difficult or even unwelcoming - that perception

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is costing us, we need to flip the script," Freeman argued.

"We need to be loud and clear that America is open for business - we want your business and we are ready to welcome the world."

"This can't come from one agency or one campaign, it must come from all of us - federal, state, local, industry leaders" and it must be "clean, consistent, and unapologetic". *DF*

### Club Med Quebec?

**CLUB** Med is currently in talks with various stakeholders to build a new resort in the mountainous town of Tremblant in Quebec, Canada by Dec 2028.

Funding will potentially come from the area's ski destination Station Mont Tremblant and real estate developer Brivia Group.

The property would bring around 300 hotel rooms to the Versant Soleil side of the town.

### QF jumps 10 places

**QANTAS** has leapt up the rankings in the World's Best Airline category at this year's Skytrax World Airline Awards in Paris, also known as 'The Oscars of the aviation industry'.

The Flying Kangaroo rebounded from last year's 24th ranking up to 14th position.

The Australian airline collected other accolades at the Skytrax awards, including being named the World's Safest Airline for 2025 and Best Airline in the Australia/Pacific region.

Meanwhile, Virgin Australia took out Best Airline Staff Service in Australia/Pacific and APAC's Best Regional Airline.

However, Middle Eastern carrier Qatar Airways once again took the honours of being named the World's Best Airline, followed by Singapore Airlines in the second spot; Cathay Pacific climbed from five to three; Emirates slid from three to four; and ANA All Nippon Airways came fifth.

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## Rail + cruise up nth

**ENTIRE** Travel Group has launched its 'Beyond Compare' campaign, offering travellers savings of up to \$3,000 per couple on combined rail & cruise journeys through Canada and Alaska with Rocky Mountaineer and Azamara - more details [HERE](#).

## CX beefs up seats

**CATHAY** Pacific has continued its trend of investing more in Aussie capacity, announcing extra flights year-round to Perth and Brisbane from 26 Oct.

The Hong Kong carrier will add two new services to the Qld capital to take it to double-daily frequencies, while Perth will be expanded from 11 to 14 a week.

In Perth, the added services will also fuel its growing business and student travel segment, with Perth Airport CCO, Kate Holsgrove, stating Cathay plays an important role in connecting to the Chinese Mainland, Japan, Europe and North America.

## Rex needs more time

**THE** administrator for Rex Airlines has formally requested another six-month lifeline from the Federal Court so it can finalise a list of suitable buyers (**TD** breaking news yesterday).

While several media reports had suggested a list of possible acquirers would be published by EY before 30 Jun, the company has asked for Rex's voluntary administration period to be pushed out to 30 Dec, so it can finalise negotiations with a "narrowed field" of bidders.

In response to the update, Federal Transport Minister Catherine King (**pictured**) confirmed the importance of keeping the carrier's regional links operational, stating government funding would continue.

"The existing loan of up to \$80 million provided to the administrators - which is yet to be fully expended - would remain available to ensure the airline can



continue to operate," King said.

The Minister added the Federal Government will tip in another \$30 million to ensure air links are not affected by any extended voluntary administration period, should it receive court approval.

King also flagged the government is receptive to providing further funding support to the successful bidder, but would be conditional on the company providing reliable and affordable air services to regional and remote communities.

"The Federal Government is not a bidder in the sale process, but is undertaking necessary work on contingencies should a market-led solution not be achieved," King added. **AB**

## Trump ban jitters

**REPORTS** that the Trump Administration is considering adding 36 countries to its entry ban list of 12 is likely to have cruise operators increasingly concerned around staffing.

While not formally announced, a leaked diplomatic cable suggested the ban list may be tripled, potentially impacting tens of thousands of crew members.

A statement issued by CLIA Global confirmed "some" cruise operators had been in touch to voice their unease about the initial ban on 12 nations.

"CLIA member cruise lines are assessing the impacts, if any, to their crew member operations," the cruise body stated.

"We understand there are questions regarding the scope and applicability of the proclamation, and that the appropriate government agencies will be providing additional clarification and guidance as needed," CLIA added.

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**Race Strauss**  
CFO Virgin Australia

## The sky's the limit for US airports

**AIRPORT** infrastructure is being modernised and expanded across the US in readiness to welcome more visitors, Brand USA's President and CEO Fred Dixon revealed at IPW in Chicago.

During his opening address, Dixon listed the various upgrades to key airports around the country that will make travelling in and around the United States more seamless.

"[Infrastructure upgrades] will meet growing demand and to deliver a world-class experience for travellers," Dixon said, pointing to Pittsburgh as the first example, where it is about to complete a massive US\$1.6 billion modernisation program.

Dixon also named a number of other projects in progress.

"In Texas, both Houston's George Bush Intercontinental (pictured) and Austin-Bergstrom are expanding to improve terminals and int'l connectivity.



"Work is underway at Tampa International Airport's Airside D, a project that constitutes its first airside terminal in nearly 20 years, while in New York City, JFK is undergoing the biggest transformation costing US\$19 billion, including two state-of-the-art terminals and improved roadways," he added.

Washington Dulles is currently building a new concourse, West Burbank and Sacramento are both undergoing major terminal projects as well, and Ashville Regional Airport in North Carolina is investing US\$400 million into expanding facilities.

Not mentioned but witnessed

by *Travel Daily* during transit were the significant updates being worked on at Minneapolis St Paul, which includes continued modernisation of terminal one's concourses, as well as the second phase of runway reconstruction.

Dixon also pointed out that IPW host city Chicago is benefitting, with O'Hare International Airport undergoing a modernisation project called 'O'Hare 21', which includes a new global terminal, expanded terminal five, and new satellite concourses. *DF*

### Globus goes wild

**GLOBUS** has launched a new tour in its Small Group Discovery range called 'South Africa: From Wine to Wild'.

The tour visits destinations such as Cape Town and Kariega Game Reserve over 13 days, with no more than 18 guests travelling on each departure - more info [HERE](#).

  
**Travel Daily**  
ON LOCATION

  
**CHICAGO**

**This issue of *Travel Daily* is coming from IPW, currently being hosted in Chicago.**

**CHICAGO** has brought out the great weather for day two of conference sessions at IPW, with tops of 30 degrees greeting delegates.

While the heat around the country has caused havoc with some FIFA Club World Cup matches, it hasn't stopped IPW. This morning, a range of destination organisations took the stage including Arkansas, and Washington DC, while others held education sessions.

This evening, IPW will host an immersive neighbourhood experience featuring Hyde Park, Pilsen, and West Town.

# II PAUSE



## Emerging markets fuel Boeing

**EXPANDING** middle classes and hyper-competitive airline sectors will be the primary catalysts for a steady 20-year demand pipeline for nearly 44,000 new aircraft, new analysis by Boeing reveals.

The manufacturer's 2025 *Commercial Market Outlook* noted its global fleet is expected to near 50,000 by 2044, with emerging markets representing more than 50% of this demand.

Nearly half of forecasted plane deliveries will be to replace older aircraft as they approach the end of their service lives, improving overall efficiency, Boeing added.

The company's outlook foreshadows an annual passenger growth rate of 4.2%, outpacing global economic growth, with airlines boosting capacity on more greener aircraft to meet the soaring demand.

By 2044, single-aisle aircraft such as the 737 variants will make up 72% of the global fleet,



suggesting airlines will look to fly more frequently on aircraft able to travel longer distances.

This shift will be driven by a growing desire for short-haul travel and low-cost carriers gaining traction with piecemeal airfares offering greater flexibility.

Demand for twin-aisle aircraft will also grow to around 8,320 planes as carriers in emerging markets boost long-range fleets.

Boeing Senior Vice President of Commercial Sales and Marketing, Brad McMullen, said resilience "will remain hallmark of this growing industry as we continue to see strong demand for new airplanes", with aviation returning to its pre-pandemic growth. *ML*

## Riyadh fleet grows

**EMERGING** Saudi Arabian carrier Riyadh Air has bolstered its fleet to nearly 200 aircraft, signing an order for 50 Airbus A350-1000 long-range planes at the Paris Air Show.

The new order complements an existing pipeline of 132 aircraft, taking its total order book to 182.

Specifics of the order include a firm purchase for 25 planes, with a further 25 as an option.

As the airline edges closer to its maiden flight later this year, Riyadh Air has its sights on flying to more than 100 cities by 2030.

Riyadh Air plans to offer a three-class product across its new A350 fleet, comprised of first, business and economy classes.

"Already in 2025, we have received our AOC and unveiled our new cabin interiors, and having now completed our initial three aircraft orders, we are in a position to fulfil our ambitious network goals," said Riyadh Air Chief Executive Tony Douglas.



## Window Seat

**WHAT'S** in a name, especially when it comes to a fine wine?

Some may take their inspiration from a floral variety that grows nearby, an animal species, a grape, or the name of the original owner.

Then, there's Andrew Dawson (**pictured**), one of 50 exhibitors on show at the Wines of Western Australia event in Sydney yesterday.

Deciding against anything pretentious, Dawson simply went with 'Yeah Wine'.

Works for us...and tasty.



## II PAUSE



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## Tourism WA raises its glass



**WINES** of Western Australia was in Sydney this week with 50 of its leading vineyards and winemakers for a comprehensive showcase of the sector, which is eager to meet rising interest from domestic and overseas visitors.

Dozens of wineries are dotted along more than 600km of the WA coast, ranging from the Swan Valley north of Perth to Albany in the deep southwest corner.

Wines of Western Australia CEO Larry Jorgenson said the region is benefiting from good numbers on direct Jetstar flights from Sydney and Melbourne into Busselton, with travellers spending longer in the region and venturing further to coastal corners such as Albany, Denmark and Esperance.

The region's population will swell again in Nov, with Margaret River selected to host the prestigious World's 50 Best Vineyards awards.

The awards will take place on 19 Nov, one day before the four-day Pair'd Margaret River Region festival, which celebrates the best available wine and food pairings.

Jorgenson is **pictured** above centre with Caroline Taylor, Tourism WA and the event's Creative Director, Emily Sharland.

## Spitsbergen refurb

**HX EXPEDITIONS' MS Spitsbergen** has completed a major refurbishment, part of the cruise line's €7 million overhaul along with sister ship *MS Fram*.

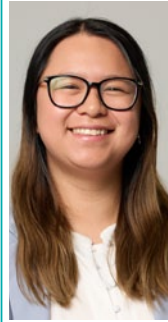
Spitsbergen features enhanced guest spaces, a bistro, science centre and updated exterior.

The 220-guest ship will sail again for the summer Arctic season in and around Svalbard, before heading east towards Norway for winter.

From Jan to Mar, it will sail above the Arctic Circle, coinciding with the launch of HX's new 'Ultimate Norway - Arctic Expedition under the Northern Lights' expedition.

## ATIA UPDATE

from Jenny Le, National Manager Events & Corporate Partnerships



**NTIA 2025** is off to an awesome start, with 1,720 peer nominations received - congratulations to everyone that's been nominated.

Your outstanding achievements have been officially recognised and we couldn't be happier for you.

With the submissions portal opening next week, I wanted to share some hints to make your submission stand out:

For the individual categories - make sure your video is engaging by maintaining eye contact with the camera.

Don't just read your notes, let your personality shine through.

Your response should also focus on your own strengths and accomplishments.

Think along the lines of, 'how have I gone above and beyond what is expected of me?'

Provide examples of how you

have implemented strategies to succeed and the results they have delivered.

For the ATIA Accredited Business categories, be sure to quantify your achievements by including clear metrics or data points to back up your statements.

As for integrating the ATAS Code of Conduct, tackle this question from both an operational and marketing perspective.

Whilst it's great that the ATIA Accredited logo is prominently featured, also think about how you train your staff to be familiar with the Code; how your terms and conditions are presented to customers; and how you actively resolve customer complaints.

Keep these tips in mind as you draft and review your submission.

Good luck - hit me with your best shot; we can't wait to hear all your incredible stories.

Aside from the above-mentioned judged categories, there will also be industry voting for the 'Most Popular' categories from 21 Jul-08 Aug - stay tuned for more details.

## Tourism credit for all

**NOMINATIONS** for the NSW Tourism Awards are now open, with accessibility in the spotlight.

This year, the program aims to recognise operators offering great service and experiences for people of all abilities, with the Excellence in Accessible Tourism category.

"Tourism is about connection, discovery and joy - and everyone should be able to take part in that," said CEO Natalie Goodward. View nomination form **HERE**.

## Hyatt's good Playa

**HYATT** Hotels has expanded its all-inclusive segment with the acquisition of Playa Hotels & Resorts, as it aims to meet guest demand in this segment.

The newly acquired brand owns, operates, and develops all-inclusive beachfront resorts in destinations such as Mexico, the Dominican Republic, and Jamaica.

It was formerly owned by Hilton Hotels & Resorts (**TD** 18 Sep 2018), with some reservations for loyalty guests now impacted.

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## Selby replaces Kim

**TRAVELLERS** Choice has welcomed Kerrie Selby aboard as a BDM for NSW and Queensland.

With more than 30 years of industry experience, Selby has previously held regional, state and national roles across the retail travel, corporate travel and hospitality sectors.

She replaces Kim Tomlinson, who recently retired after a decade with Travellers Choice.

**Pictured:** New recruit Selby, with outgoing Kim Tomlinson and GM of Sales, Nicola Strudwick.



## California is still golden

**VISIT** California is reassuring travellers that it is still safe to visit the Golden State following recent immigration enforcement actions and ensuing protests that have sparked negative headlines around the world.

In a recent statement to industry partners, Visit California CEO Caroline Beteta said the DMO is "reacting with intention" and "working behind the scenes" to let travellers know that the state is still open for tourism.

"We're doing that by counselling reporters on the scale of California," she said, stressing that the incidents dominating media coverage are limited to a small part of Los Angeles County.

"That work is paying dividends, and our state's geography is being reflected more consistently in coverage," Beteta added.

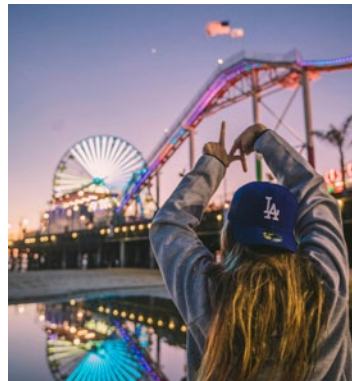
All 13 of Visit California's international offices are tracking sentiment and coverage in key global markets, using the data to guide its messaging, which the DMO's chief said is "being carefully timed and tailored to meet audiences where they are, both emotionally and culturally".

## Embraer 10k orders

**OVER** the next 20 years, 10,500 orders will be placed for Embraer's sub-150-seat jets and turboprops, according to its newly-released *Market Outlook*.

The report analysed the global influences and trends impacting the call for new aircraft, such as the demand for regional access and need for mixed fleets to ensure long-term growth.

Other insights included the growth of world passenger traffic, which is predicted to increase 3.9% annually, with China leading among the regions.



"It serves as a powerful reminder that even in turbulent times, the steady education and strong media relationships we've built over decades make a lasting difference," Beteta concluded. *JM*

## Kelsian inks US biz

**KELSIAN** US subsidiary Hotard Coaches has secured a contract to provide transport services for Worley Field Services in Louisiana.

The initial work scope is currently anticipated to be delivered over a three-year period to Aug 2028, securing revenue of approximately US\$59 million.

## Taiwan in America

**THE** Taiwan Tourism Administration (TTA) has opened a tourism information centre in the United States for the first time, building on a continued global push by the Asian country to raise its tourism profile.

Linking up with American travel agencies and airlines, the TTA marked the new office space by hosting B2B workshops, showcasing the best of Taiwan.

The move follows local efforts by the destination to attract more Australian travellers as well, with Taiwan running a range of trade and media famils in recent years, as well as improving air access.

Geopolitical pundits theorise the firmer tourism push in recent years is attributable in part to a security strategy to normalise visitation as a buttress against Chinese military ambitions.

## CX knocks up tonne

**CATHAY** Group has celebrated reaching 100 global destinations this month, marking the milestone with a festive cocktail reception at Island Shangri-La in Hong Kong.

This year alone, the group announced or launched 18 extra destinations via its HK Express and Cathay Pacific brands, including to ports such as Adelaide, Hyderabad, Dallas Fort Worth, Kuala Lumpur, and Rome.

"Our investment program of over HK\$100b across our entire offering of fleet, cabin products, lounges and digital services is also the most ambitious and largest in the company's history," said Cathay Group Chair Patrick Healy.

**MEANWHILE**, CX started nonstop flights between Hong Kong and Munich this week.

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## Lizard goes ultra-luxe

**LIZARD** Island, Australia's most secluded and exclusive luxury resort, is hosting a special culinary event this weekend, which it describes as "the ultimate celebration of oceanic luxury".

Running from 20-22 Jun in collaboration with Liddon Pearls and Champagne Lillier, 'Pearls and Plates' will blend gourmet dining with the heritage of pearling, featuring local produce and Australian-grown pearls.

The experience includes a series of events, such as champagne and canapes on the beach, a pearl grading masterclass, a six-course degustation dinner, as well as a decedent 'pearlescent' facial experience.

If the event proves successful, Lizard Island said it plans to continue expanding its calendar of bespoke collaborations.

## It's by invitation only

**APPLICATIONS** are now open for Ultra 2026, considered the world's most exclusive invitation-only gathering of the ultra luxury travel elite.

Now in its second year, the event is limited to 200 participants and will take place from 25-29 Jan at Atlantis The Royal, Dubai, giving ultra-luxury advisors the chance to connect with the most prestigious suppliers.

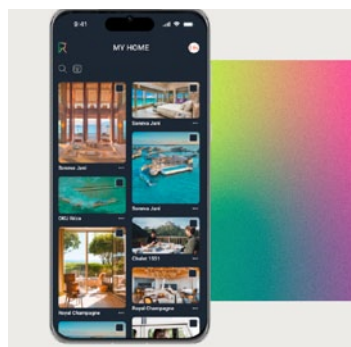
## PIXI PITCHES MAGIC TO LUXE SELLERS

A **NEW** AI-powered content platform has launched for the luxury travel trade, aimed at helping the sector stay competitive in today's fast-paced online marketing landscape.

PIXI is a first-of-its-kind content-sharing and storytelling platform, tailored to the needs of hotels, resorts, DMCS and the travel advisors who sell them.

Using the latest AI tech, the new solution allows hotels and suppliers to become discoverable via content sharing, while giving travel sellers access to ready-to-use content to inspire and convert interest into bookings.

The creators of PIXI highlighted that 73% of travellers think visuals influence where they book, however most advisors still



rely on clunky portals and folders to access and share content, which can cost them time and conversion, PIXI claimed.

Paired with the prevalence of travel influencers and OTAs, who are also investing heavily in AI and visual user experience, the trade risks being left behind, the new entrant added.

"Think Dropbox and Pinterest for luxury travel, but smarter, safer, and actually built for the industry," said co-founder and CCO Alan Ball.

"PIXI is the ultimate visual search engine for the travel industry, making hotels, resorts, and suppliers instantly discoverable and marketable through their content."

More than 200 luxury agencies and operators have already signed up for PIXI's services in 30 global markets, including agents from Travel Associates and MTA Travel, while leading hotel groups are also using it, including Six Senses Maldives.

The platform is 100% free for qualified travel designers to sign up and use. *JM*

## Regent's prestigious new suite makes a splash

**REGENT** Seven Seas Cruises' (RSSC) newest ship, *Seven Seas Prestige*, is now home to the largest all-inclusive, ultra-luxury cruise ship suite in history.

Starting at \$40,000 a night, the 817m<sup>2</sup> Skyview Regent Suite offers panoramic ocean views, 344m<sup>2</sup> of wraparound balcony space, two bedrooms, two-and-a-half bathrooms, and an elegant living room.

The space also boasts a floating natural stone staircase alongside a private in-suite elevator, a personal gym and sauna, a dedicated massage



room, an expansive walk-in closet, and a formal in-suite dining area complemented by a glass-enclosed bar.

Guests will also enjoy exclusive access to a private dining venue, a dedicated personal butler, daily spa treatments, a private car with a driver and guide in every port of call, and much more.

## Surf into Soneva

**AUSTRALIAN** surfer Luke Stedman will host an exclusive surf residency next month at Soneva Fushi, a luxury retreat in the Maldives.

From 15-28 Jul, guests join the former World Championship Tour pro on communal surf trips and a performance surf camp featuring breath work, video analysis, mobility drills and guided sessions.

Guests will stay in beachfront or overwater villas, snorkel with manta rays, and more - details **HERE**.

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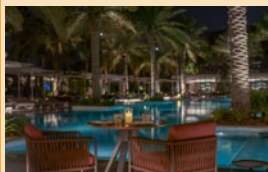
**W Brisbane** has transformed its 32 suites, from the newly refreshed 70m<sup>2</sup> Cozy Suites, designed for comfort and relaxation, to the 85m<sup>2</sup> Marvelous Suites and the expansive 200m<sup>2</sup> Extreme WOW Suite, which features interconnecting rooms ideal for hosting friends and family. Guests can also expect the latest tech additions, including 65-inch TVs and soundbars in all suites, and Dyson Airwrap tools in the WOW and Extreme WOW suites.



A private events venue near Saint-Tropez has relaunched as a hotel. **Le Beauvallon**, which is set on 10 acres of gardens by the beach, is now offering its 25 sea-facing suites to individual guest stays from 01 Jul-31 Oct 2025. It marks the beginning of a wider two-part redevelopment led by COMO Hotels and Resorts, with the full rebranding of the Le Beauvallon slated for 2026. The property features a beach club and a private pontoon for yacht tenders.



A cellar door wine tasting experience has been introduced at **Le Meridien Melbourne**, with each featuring one winemaker and four generous glasses of wine. A curated selection of cheese and charcuterie boards will be served alongside, with the experience open to 25 customers once per month. Sessions will also be hosted by a local wine expert, who will guide guests through each pour.



Diners at Nobu by the Beach, the Japanese restaurant brand's outlet at **Atlantis The Royal, Dubai**, has introduced a romantic moonlit night swim experience. Taking place on Fri nights this summer, the moonlit 'dip and dine' experience features a DJ and allows patrons to take a relaxing swim before retreating to poolside tables to indulge in Nobu's signature cuisine under the stars.



Melbourne Airport's dual-branded **Novotel and Ibis Styles** hotel is taking the fight to pool drownings with new AI-powered tech designed to prevent the tragedy occurring. The tech has been installed in the hotel's Higher State Health Club and features security cameras that see through the water and analyse swimmer behaviour to identify changes and alert health club staff in real-time.



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## New Marriott hotel in Nepal



**MARRIOTT** Bonvoy's Autograph Collection Hotels has unveiled its first property in South Asia, The Soaltee Kathmandu, Autograph Collection in Nepal.

Located in the heart of the city, the 285-room hotel offers guests panoramic views of the Himalayan ranges and the sacred Swoyambhunath Stupa.

The Soaltee Kathmandu is situated on 12 acres of lush, landscaped grounds in Kathmandu's Tahachal area and its interiors are infused with local craftsmanship and motifs, paying tribute to its Nepalese heritage.

There is also the all-day Garden Terrace serving traditional Nepali cuisine, Kakori restaurant which offers Awadhi-Indian specialties and Bao Xuan, an authentic Chinese restaurant.

Guests can also enjoy an open-air dining space with live music and garden views or the Rodi Bar and Sports Lounge.

Meanwhile, the hotel caters for large-scale gatherings with its 2,322sqm indoor and outdoor banquet space.

"The debut of Autograph Collection Hotels in South Asia with The Soaltee Kathmandu, Autograph Collection is a proud milestone for Marriott

International, marking the arrival of our 19th brand in this vibrant region," said Ranju Alex, Regional Vice President, Marriott International - South Asia.

"South Asia continues to be a dynamic growth engine for Marriott International, and the debut of Autograph Collection Hotels in Kathmandu reflects our commitment to expanding into culturally rich leisure destinations," he added.

Autograph Collection has currently more than 300 hotels in its network. *JHM*

## TA inks Indo deal

**TOURISM** Australia and Indonesian travel agency Dwidaya Tour have signed a three-year Memorandum of Understanding as the DMO aims to expand its profile across Southeast Asia.

Through the deal, plans are in place to engage the Indonesian travel trade across the cities of Jakarta, Surabaya, Malang, Semarang, Medan and Makassar.

According to Tourism Australia's Regional GM, Jennifer Doig, in the 12 months to Mar 2025, the number of Indonesians visiting Australia for leisure rose by 15% on the same period last year.



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# Apply now to help shape the Gold Coast's green future

There's still time for businesses to get involved in shaping the future of sustainable tourism on the Gold Coast through the City of Gold Coast's exciting new Nature-Based Tourism Program.

Available to new and existing operators, the program supports the development and expansion of immersive, sustainable tourism experiences that highlight the Gold Coast's rich natural environment and cultural heritage.

Visitor demand for Gold Coast nature-based activities such as whale watching and Indigenous cultural experiences has soared in recent years, so it's time to strike while the iron is hot, according to Paul

Donovan, Chair of the new program's Assessment Panel.

"Forever we've been known for the beaches and the theme parks, but you know we've got the green behind the gold... a lot of the international travellers want to explore that side of the Gold Coast," said Donovan. "Our campaign headline 'Tourism is in our nature' is so perfect for what we have to offer."

Gold Coast Mayor Tom Tate believes the initiative will be a win-win for the local economy and environment.

"Eligible businesses are encouraged to apply for funding and make the most of the benefits that come with the growing global demand for nature-based tourism," Mayor Tate said.

"Let's work together to find new ways for locals and visitors to explore our natural city with sustainability and conservation in mind." Applications are closing soon.

For details, visit [Nature-Based Tourism Program | City of Gold Coast](#).

## APPLICATIONS OPEN

Grants and funding applications for the Gold Coast Nature Based Tourism Program are closing soon.

**Apply now**