



Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today features six pages of news, plus a product profile from **Tourism Solomons**, & a full page from:

- City of Gold Coast

AI lashed, routes cut

ROUTES across the Air India network - including to London - have been cut as the airline was scolded by the Indian aviation safety watchdog for "repeated and serious violations" of pilot duty time regulations.

Three senior executives have been relieved of their duties related to rostering, while the carrier has also been warned of flying three Airbus aircraft without timely checks.

As a result, AI has cancelled 15% of its international routes up until 15 Jul, including connections between India and UK ports such as Heathrow and Gatwick. *DF*

No Doha disruptions

WHILE Smartraveller last week raised its warning level for Australian travellers visiting or transiting through Doha (*TD* 19 Jun), *Travel Daily* understands Virgin Australia's new wet-leased Doha services remain unaffected.

If for any reason a change is required due to the escalating military conflict in the Middle East, VA and Qatar Airways are likely to work together on identifying safe alternatives, and guests will be well-informed of any potential impacts.

Victoria makes new pitch

THE Victorian Government has teamed up with several travel and tourism operators to attract more visitors to the state as part of a new visitor partnership model.

Malaysia Airlines; Singapore Airlines; Air New Zealand; Alpine Resorts Victoria; and Accor have all been tapped by the Victorian Tourism Industry Council to offer deals and promote Melbourne and regional Victoria to important overseas source markets.

The partnerships will market a range of Victorian tourism experiences through advertising campaigns and roadshows, including for increased bookings to the Twelve Apostles, Sovereign Hill, Puffing Billy Railway, and the Grampians National Park.

While the Victorian Government has not yet disclosed any specific visitor targets for the initiative, an independent report from KPMG found that for every \$1 spent through Visit Victoria's marketing activities, the return on investment was around \$27.

The latest efforts follow the state government this year deciding to keep Visit Victoria's annual marketing budget at the vastly reduced \$6 million a year, down from the \$32 million

Gold Coast grants

THE City of Gold Coast is now accepting applications for nature-based tourism grants from operators offering immersive experiences - see **page seven**.



allocated just a few years ago.

The Victorian Govt has also come in for heavy criticism over its cruise policies, with high port fees seeing reduced cruise ship homeporting in recent seasons.

Have your say soon

THE Australian Travel Industry Association (ATIA) is reminding members there is only one week remaining to lodge a submission to the 2025 ATAS Charter Review.

Formally launched every three years, the process offers key opportunities for members to help shape the policies that define ATIA Accreditation, and ensure the framework remains fair, practical, and representative of today's travel businesses.

"We are fortunate to have Michael Terceiro (*TD* 15 May) conducting this independent and rigorous review given his deep expertise in consumer law and regulatory frameworks," ATIA Chief Executive Dean Long said.

"It is in our members' interests and the travelling public's interests to ensure the scheme remains fair, practical, and fit for purpose," he added.

Have your say **HERE**.

The review outcomes will guide potential amendments announced later this year.

New fat diving spot

IT MIGHT have a funny name, but new Solomon Islands Fatboys Resort is serious about offering scuba diving experiences near Gizo in the Western Province.

Guests can enjoy numerous offshore reefs, World War II ships and plenty more - see **page eight**.



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Nexus' global ambitions

GLOBAL destination management brand Nexus DMC is on track to become one of the top three fleet providers for coach touring in Europe by the end of the year, according to Australia/NZ CEO Sahil Nijhawan.

The Indian-founded, Singaporean-headquartered company is pursuing touring logistics as one of its new high-yielding business avenues.

"We own 100-plus coaches in Europe, and by the end of this year, we will probably be among the top three largest companies in Europe for fleet," Nijhawan told *Travel Daily*.

"We also now have a fleet company in Australia which is looking at leasing new buses and other vehicles, so we're more active in controlling ground operations as well.

"We have also got buses in Middle East and Asia," he added.

Nijhawan said that backed by this growing road fleet, the company is now in discussions with a number of major touring brands to supply vehicles for their seasonal needs in Europe over the peak summer season.

Coaches are also being provided to smaller touring operators with less regular needs, along with niche operators running their own special interest itineraries.

Nexus DMC has significantly increased its global footprint in recent years, acquiring regional wholesalers in key markets to expand its brand to 32 offices.



The company's local growth is being supported through the industry expertise of former Tourism Australia Managing Director Andrew McEvoy, who now sits on the Nexus board.

McEvoy has guided the company through establishing a satellite office in Sydney alongside its new regional headquarters in Melbourne, and helped to establish the brand on the ground in Auckland via another regional presence.

"We started in Sep last year [in Melbourne] and today, we have about 25 people, four contractors in Sydney and a couple in Auckland, so we've already hired about 30 people in the span of nine months," Nijhawan added.

Earlier this year, the company also partnered with US-based Travel Answers Group (TAG) (TD 28 Feb) to become its exclusive DMC primarily for Australia and New Zealand, where it aims to transact around \$40 million in sales this year.

The company is anticipating catering to around 10,000 inbound arrivals in Australia and New Zealand this year.

Nexus will also supply TAG with product for sales elsewhere via its regional office network. *ML*

Buy CATO Xmas tix

THE annual CATO Christmas Lunch will return for another year and tickets are now available.

The event will take place on 04 Dec at the Sheraton Grand Sydney Hyde Park.

This year's theme is 'merry and bright', and guests are encouraged to dress the part.

Earlybird tickets can be purchased for \$185 (including GST), or \$1850 for a table of 10.

See [HERE](#) for more information.

Tanzania tourist tax

INTERNATIONAL visitors to Tanzania may soon be required to pay \$US44 for travel insurance when entering the country.

The Tanzanian Government is currently discussing a proposal to mandate insurance in an effort to offer comprehensive traveller protection and ease pressure on the country's healthcare and tourism infrastructure.

The policy would cover risks such as medical emergencies, repatriation, accidents and more.

Albatross guaranteed

ALBATROSS Tours has guaranteed all of its 'festive tours' for 2025 will depart, which includes its Christmas market, Christmas holiday, New Year's, and Northern Lights tours.

An example of the festive experiences on offer is the 11-day 'Bohemian Christmas Markets' tour departing 28 Nov, priced at \$6,997 per person, twin share, or \$8,597 for solo guests.

ON LOCATION

TIMOR-LESTE

Today's issue of *TD* is coming to you from Timor-Leste as we are among the first guests on board Pearl Expeditions' shakedown voyage.

PASPALLEY Pearl is gleaming as *Travel Daily* is among the first to sample the Pearl Expeditions product for the next two nights.

The ship is in the Timor-Leste capital of Dili, where she will welcome groups of select travel agents over the next few weeks before returning to Australia.

Only 30 passengers are catered for on each voyage, although the ship certainly has room for more - but that's the beauty, as it means more space for each guest to enjoy.

There are two 32-seat restaurants on board, one indoor for dinner and one al fresco for breakfast and lunch.

Our first day with the company will be spent exploring nearby Atauro Island, just across the Wetar Strait from the capital of Dili.

After a morning learning about the local communities, Timorese history and way of life, the afternoon will be available for snorkelling and swimming directly from the ship's onboard marina.

Paspaley Pearl returns to Australia next month ahead of its first revenue sailing on 31 Jul.

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A fabulous Fox farewell



THE upcoming departure of Abercrombie & Kent chief Deb Fox to the UK (**TD** 04 Feb) was celebrated on Sat with friends and industry colleagues at Melbourne's iconic Esplanade Hotel in St Kilda.

Guests, including **Travel Daily's** Jenny and Bruce Piper, travelled from across the country to farewell Fox and her family, who are relocating in two weeks to London where she will formally take up her new role.

Fox has served as MD for Abercrombie & Kent Travel Group's Asia-Pacific region since 2022, with her expanded UK remit seeing the current local team continuing to report into her in London.

A&K said the move is part of its ongoing global expansion strategy, and its "commitment to providing exceptional travel experiences in key markets".

Pictured at the exclusive gathering are, from left: Susan Haberle and Michelle Mickan,

A&K; Danni Newman, Flight Centre; Karen Catalano; Chris Hall, Globus family of brands; Debra Fox, A&K; Justine Sealey, Ramsgate Travel; Cindi Lee, Helloworld Travel Blacktown, Seven Hills & Lithgow; Julie Primmer, Ascend Travel Group; and Mary-Anne Guest and Michelle Ashcroft from Phil Hoffman Travel. **BP**

New AKL-EZE route

CHINA Eastern Airlines will launch a new Shanghai-Auckland-Buenos Aires route in Dec, operating twice weekly as an extension of its existing daily Shanghai-Auckland flights.

The carrier has applied for fifth freedom rights which would allow it to sell tickets and carry pax between NZ and Argentina.

The new service will see the return of non-stop NZ flights to Buenos Aires for the first time since Air NZ suspended its Argentina operation in 2020.

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Jayride SAAS move

JAYRIDE has launched a new B2B SaaS platform targeting the ground transportation industry.

The announcement follows the appointment of a board restructure and technology entrepreneur Randy Prado as CEO earlier this year (**TD** 24 Feb).

Powered by the Jayride tech stack, the new platform seeks to address previous issues with transport providers failing to receive prompt payments, and the complexities of managing their own operations.

Jayride serves as an aggregator and feeder of new business, however a lack of automation had been stifling business flow.

New France rail link

FRANCE'S high-speed rail market has seen the launch of a new Trenitalia service connecting Paris to Marseille.

The link is the latest to be unveiled by the Italian rail operator in its quest to challenge the dominant French national railway company SNCF, adding to its Paris-Milan service via Lyon, Chambery, and Turin.

Trenitalia's operations in France are reportedly seeking a minimum 60% load factor in its first 12 months of operation, attracting passengers through competitive standard one-way fares starting from €\$27 (A\$48).

High-speed rail has become an increasingly attractive option for travellers in France, as many seek a greener alternative to flying.

Preferred hotels

THE NSW Treasury is inviting accommodation providers to participate in the NSW Government Accommodation Program for 2025-27.

A request for proposal will be sent via CVENT/Lanyon for submissions by 09 Jul - info **HERE**.

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Window Seat

TECH billionaire Jeff Bezos is planning a wedding in Venice so big that it has triggered vehement protests from locals who do not want the lavish affair to go ahead.

While the details of the ceremony and reception remain largely under wraps, media reports suggest the wedding celebrating Bezos and journalist Lauren Sanchez will take place later this month and book out several iconic venues across the Italian city.

One such venue is the famous Misericordia, which is rumoured to be where the ceremony will take place.

However, protesters are planning to say 'I object' on a large-scale, with blockades of the Venetian canals flagged.

"Bezos will never get to the Misericordia," one protest organiser told the crowd at a recent rally.

"We will block the canals, line the streets with our bodies, block the canals with inflatables, dinghies, & boats."



Singapore flexes in Mar

SINGAPORE dominated international air traffic volumes from Australia in Mar, with the popular Asian destination featuring in three of the top five busiest city pairs.

The latest figures from BITRE showed that Melbourne-Singapore had the largest share

NT tourism boost

MILITARY heritage tourism in the Northern Territory has for the first time been allocated a dedicated funding stream under round nine of the Visitor Experience Enhancement Program (VEEP).

Under the new VEEP funding allocation, eight operators have received support from the NT Department of Tourism.

Some of the recipients include Marchant Enterprises, which will improve accessibility in the WWII Oil Storage Tunnels with upgraded lighting and ventilation, as well as Gooney Bird Adventures, which is restoring a WWII aircraft to launch scenic flights following Top End wartime flight paths.

Tiwi Enterprises is another beneficiary, which will use the funds to develop marine AV experiences to tell the story of the bombing of Darwin Harbour.

Tourism is one of five priority industries identified by the NT Government to grow jobs, attract investment, and restore the Territory's reputation as a 'must-do' destination.



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of the international market with 4.1% of all passengers, just ahead of Sydney-Singapore (4%).

In a positive sign for Western Australia, Perth-Singapore also made the list in fourth spot with 3.4%, with Auckland services to Melbourne and Sydney rounding out the top five - at 3.6% and 2.9% of the market respectively.

The Lion City was helped along by strong capacity, with Singapore Airlines leading the pack of the foreign flagged airlines with 9%.

SQ pipped Air NZ (7.8%) and Emirates (4.9%) in terms of pax carriage, with both carriers sliding slightly on the same month in '24.

Cathay Pacific was the next best at 4.8%, followed by Qatar Airways (3.3%), Scoot (2.8%), and Malaysia Airlines (2.33%). AB

Philly draws on art

PHILADELPHIA has announced a major investment in arts and culture at IPW, as it prepares to celebrate the 250th anniversary of the US as a unified country.

The Philadelphia Museum of art, Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, and well-known local art collectors, the Middleton family, will present the most expansive collection of American art ever mounted in Philadelphia in a dual-venue exhibition called 'A Nation of Artists'.

During IPW, Sasha Suda, the Chief Executive Officer of the Philadelphia Museum of Art (PMA), announced the details of the exhibition, which will open in Apr next year, uniting three substantial collections of American art as the city looks to attract more art lovers from around the world.

'A Nation of Artists' will feature more than 1,000 unique pieces at the Philadelphia Museum of Art and the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts (PAFA). DF

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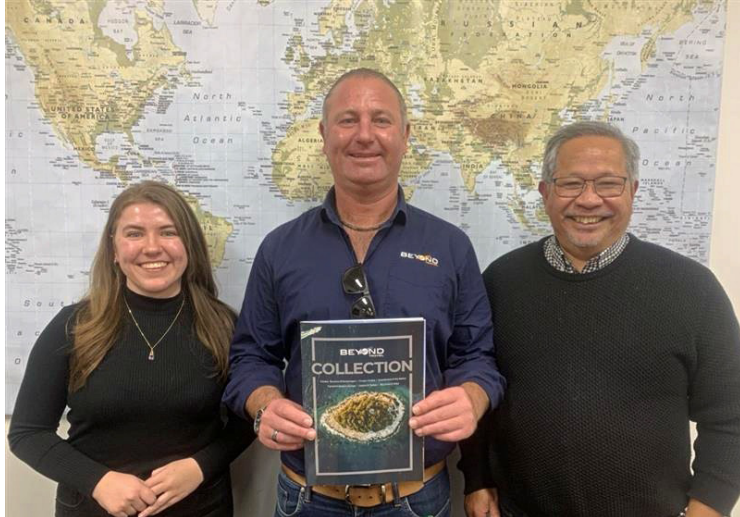
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Going beyond with Beyond



ECLECTIC yet tantalising mix of itineraries feature in Beyond Travel's new 2025 brochure, including adventures in countries well off the typical travel path.

Featuring prominently in the guide is a revised collection of Signature Journeys, already the most popular in the range but now with a handful of bonus inclusions and treats.

The company is also a key seller of Havila Voyages, a little-known line which runs a frequent supply route along the Norwegian coast using four ships all constructed within the last four years.

Havila operates sailings between Bergen and Kirkenes, stopping at a range of small and remote coastal towns, with passengers able to enjoy a range of shore tours and experiences.

Albania is another destination generating considerable interest from agents and travellers, with well-travelled Aussies eager to avoid the crowds of major cities.

Three new privately escorted tours in the eastern European

country have been launched by Beyond Travel, with local experts taking visitors to scenic wonders, quaint towns and exciting cities.

"If your focus is Eastern Europe, we're the specialists you want in your corner," said Beyond Travel CEO, Michael Lavilles, who is **pictured** above right with Marketing Coordinator, Sarah Corderoy, and BDM NSW, ACT and Qld, Matt Symonds. *ML*

Let QR entertain you

QATAR Airways has unveiled its new next-generation in-flight entertainment system on board its Boeing 777-9 fleet.

Launched at the recent 55th International Paris Air Show, the system is powered by Panasonic Avionics' new Converix platform, and offers passengers dynamic content tailored to their preferences, seat-level smart controls, and a digitally-enabled experience, the carrier revealed.

"It is a game-changer that will completely redefine entertainment in the sky," said Qatar Airways Senior VP Product Development, Xia Cai.

Qatar Airways was recently named World's Best Airline for the ninth time in a row at the Skytrax Awards, followed by Singapore Airlines, Cathay Pacific Airways, Emirates and ANA All Nippon Airways (**TD** 18 Jun).

Driverless cabs in US

TRAVELLERS in Austin can be the first to try out Tesla's Robotaxi service, which launched its first pilot service yesterday.

For a flat fee of \$US4.20, the driverless electric cabs are initially operating in South Congress.



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Watching out for worms

TECH giant HP claims hackers are targeting "click-fatigued" travellers via online travel deals.

The *HP Threat Insights Report* outlines new ways hackers are evading detection such as mirroring well-known websites and sending nefarious EDMs.

In one example highlighted by bot detector CAPTCHA, a website that looked identical to Booking.com contained a cookie banner & downloaded malicious Javascript to those clicking 'accept'.

While the practice has been detected, it remains active and continues to target holidaymakers eyeing their next getaway.

HP threat researchers also found imposter files hiding in pop-ups that look like standard Windows operating screens, such as Library, Documents and others resembling applications like PowerPoint and Excel.

"Since the introduction of privacy regulations such



as General Data Protection Regulation, normalised cookie prompts has seen most users fall into a habit of 'click first, think later', said HP Security Lab Principal Threat Researcher, Patrick Schlapfer.

"By mimicking the look and feel of a booking site at a time when holiday-goers are rushing to make travel plans, attackers don't need advanced techniques - just a well-timed prompt and the user's instinct to click," he added.

HP Global Head of Security, Ian Pratt, said users are growing desensitised to pop-ups and permission requests, making it easier for hackers. *ML*



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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.
tom.green@vitapointpartners.com

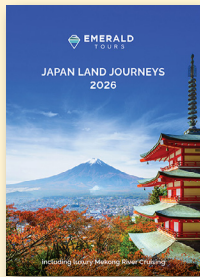


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Scenic - Canada, Alaska, & USA Land Journeys
Discover Canada's stunning lakes and mountain ranges, alongside the vibrant cultures of its cities, as part of Scenic Luxury Cruises & Tours' 'Canada, Alaska, & USA Luxury Land Journeys 2026' brochure. Travellers can take in the rugged coastlines of Alaska and the fascinating history of the Eastern United States on a luxury smaller group escorted journey with Scenic next year. There is a range of 15 departures all over the continent, ranging from nine to 36 days, from ports including Calgary, Vancouver, Victoria, and Ottawa. The brand's special Scenic Enrich moments will be a highlight of the program, and include learning the stories of Canada's first nations people, and a black bear lecture from a local expert. Guests will also enjoy Scenic Special Stays in hotels which are selected for their location, character, and heritage, such as Canada's Fairmont Resorts.



Emerald Tours - Japan Land Journeys 2026
Emerald Tours, which last year took over its sister brand Evergreen Tours' land itineraries, has released its first 'Japan Land Journeys 2026' brochure, detailing its holidays in the country for next year. A highlight of the new release of tours is the 13-day 'Wonders of Japan with Hiroshima', which travels from Osaka to Tokyo, and visits the solemn wonder of the first target of a nuclear weapon in history. The brochure also details Emerald's famous luxury Mekong river cruising, which can be combined with its Japan tours.



Soneva Fushi - Surf Camp with Luke Stedman
Travellers can experience bespoke surf sessions with former professional surfer Luke Stedman at Soneva Fushi next month. The five-day camp will be hosted by the Australian surfing legend from 18-22 Jul, and is suitable for both beginners and intermediate/advanced surfers. Guests will be grouped by skill level and guided through a full-day curriculum at the Maldivian property. Prices start from US\$1,100 per person per day, with those not wishing to commit to a week-long camp able to partake in one of three more individualised sessions throughout the week. The five-star property is located in the Baa Atoll, one of the Maldives' largest islands. By night, guests will stay in overwater villas, some with as many as nine bedrooms, while relaxing at the Soneva Soul Spa and Wellness Centre.



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HK route adds new player



CELEBRATORY events were recently held at both Hong Kong International Airport and Sydney Airport to mark Hong Kong Airlines' inaugural flight linking the two destinations.

The carrier's President Jeff Sun said that as a full-service local airline, the launch of its Sydney service marked a "significant step" in its transformation to being an international airline.

"Sydney is not only a popular destination for leisure and business travel but also one of Australia's most vital economic hubs," Sun said.

"The expansion of the bilateral traffic rights agreement allows us to offer more choice to travellers in both cities, strengthening the connection between them."

Hong Kong Airlines will bring more competition to the route which is also operated by Qantas and Cathay Pacific, with the brand using A330s in a bid to deliver a "passenger-centric in-flight experience through attentive service and fine dining"

The touchdown in Sydney on Sat marked the Aussie hub's 52nd air partner, and was encouraged by the first expansion in bilateral air traffic rights between Australia and Hong Kong in 19 years.

"We thank the Federal Government for its role in enabling this important agreement, which reflects the strength of our long-standing cultural and economic ties," Sydney Airport CEO Scott Charlton said. **AB**

Ajet signs neo deal

TURKISH Airlines' budget carrier Ajet has signed a lease deal for another 10 A321neos from Avolon, with the aircraft to be delivered in 2027.

The airline currently serves 100 destinations across Türkiye, the Middle East, Europe, and North Africa, with the jets to help fuel further network expansion.

Globus still cares

A NEW video showing the role travel can play bridging cultures, healing and uniting the population has been launched by Globus family of brands.

As part of the tour operator's 'Cares' initiative, the latest video builds on a series which began with 'This is how we row', focusing on the company's origins of one man taking people on rowing tours around Lake Lugano. **CLICK HERE** to watch the video.



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Fatboys – the new kid on the Solomon Islands dive scene

One of the best-known names on the Solomon Islands tourism scene, the improbably-named Fatboys Resort near Gizo in the Western Province has joined the ranks of the highly qualified dive outfits operating in the destination. The Western Province is renowned for some of the most diverse diving to be found anywhere in the world, from World War II ships and aircraft to numerous offshore reefs, spectacular coral formations, plummeting walls, and abundant marine life. SCUBA enthusiasts are beyond spoilt for choice and can choose from a plethora of amazing locations - 'Grand Central Station' boasts the highest fish count in the world with more than 275 species recorded in its teeming waters, 'Joe's Wall' offers a

spectacular 60-metre wall and Kennedy Island, named for former US President John F. Kennedy who was shipwrecked there during WWII, offers a drift dive over shallow coral reefs, ideal for novice divers and Open Water Diver training. Many of the area's dive sites can be combined on a same-day morning and afternoon basis. Fatboys can cater to all types of divers – from beginners and experts and groups of all sizes and non-divers too with a variety of snorkelling tours easily arranged.

For more information on Fatboys Resort, [click here](#).

For more information on diving in the Solomon Islands, [click here](#).

NEED HELP?

Speak to the expert - Tourism Solomons' Trade Manager Australia/New Zealand, Richard Skewes is the go to point for all travel industry related enquiries:

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