

Hilton's H gets hot

OPERATIONS at Hilton Surfers Paradise have returned to normal after the hotel's 'H' roof branding ignited overnight.

More than 430 guests and residents were evacuated from the complex's two towers, with six fire crews taking around an hour to extinguish the blaze.

An investigation is underway to determine the cause, which saw falling debris create small spot fires on around eight balconies.

Adventure by Air takes off

EXCLUSIVE

ORIGINALLY known as Crooked Compass by Air, the business division led by Lisa Pagotto has formally rebranded and relaunched as Adventure by Air.

The new operator offers travellers adventures by plane or helicopter to off-the-beaten-track corners of Australia, from remote cattle stations to high-end lodges.

While the Crooked Compass brand offers international holidays, Adventure by Air is solely focused on the domestic market, however the same team sits behind the Adventure by Air brand, reassured Pagotto.

"We are offering the same level of service and high touch expertise and that's not going to be changing anytime soon".

This time, the brand is also playing in the MICE space, as Australian companies are now looking for unique experiences closer to home.

"Budgets haven't quite come back - they're almost there, but not to where the big corporate players used to play pre-pandemic," Pagotto told **TD**.

"People are still looking for something that's still quite close to home, and has a 'wow' factor."

The flagship journey is a 32-day trip by private aircraft, featuring a combination of luxury lodges and exclusive properties, like the Gilberton Outback Retreat in Queensland, which is only accessible by air. **JHM**

Check out the full story **HERE**.

Aqua joins NCL fleet

NORWEGIAN Cruise Line (NCL), has taken delivery of *Norwegian Aqua*, the 20th ship in its fleet and the first in the next-generation Prima Plus Class.

At a ceremony held at the Fincantieri shipyard in Italy, the 3,571-passenger *Aqua* was formally welcomed by executives and dignitaries, heralded by the cruise line as key for taking the brand into the next growth phase.

The vessel is 10% larger in size and capacity than existing ships like *Norwegian Prima* and *Norwegian Viva*, and will offer passengers more wide-open spaces, thrills, dining, and immersive activities.

Travel Daily will be aboard *Aqua's* inaugural cruise next week, so stay tuned for all of the exciting updates.

Pratt returns to HLO

JULIE Pratt has been appointed National Sales Manager for the Helloworld branded and associate retail networks, marking a return to the company after four years.

Most recently, Pratt was with nib Group as Partnerships Manager, and before that held the role of Sales Manager with Silversea.

Her previous tenure with Helloworld was as Business Manager, where she was responsible for supporting the Victoria network.



Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today features seven pages of news, including our **Corporate Update**, plus a full page from **Crystal Cruises**.

New season offer

CRYSTAL Cruises is offering savings of up to \$6,000 per suite as part of its New Season Offer.

Deals currently in market are available for voyages departing in 2025 and 2026 - see **page eight**.

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Around
Formosa Taiwan

AW appoints sales chief

ADVENTURE World has appointed Elsa McLean (pictured) to the position of Head of Sales, a role she will formally assume for the operator on Mon.

The recruitment of the former Regent Seven Seas Cruises (RSSC) senior BDM was revealed today at Flight Centre Travel Group's Luxury Travel Collection Global Business Owner's Soiree, taking place in Brisbane.

Adventure World said McLean will bring a unique blend of expertise with a focus on the luxury market.

"Anyone who knows Elsa knows her infectious enthusiasm for life, and she's an active person who embraces every day with gusto," Adventure World said.

"But what truly drives her is a deep commitment to sustainability and travel with purpose, it's not just a 'buzz word' for Elsa, it's a core value.

"This was one of the key



reasons she was so excited to join the Adventure World team."

McLean enjoyed a long tenure at RSSC based in Qld, having been promoted through the sales team for close to a decade.

Outside of accruing extensive cruise experience, she also brings knowledge of the travel agent and accommodation sector to her latest position.

McLean replaces Andrew Eddy in the position, who made the call to return to Hurtigruten in Jan to be its Sales Director Asia Pacific (TD 31 Jan) AB

WSI attraction fund

INTERNATIONAL airlines are being incentivised to schedule flights to Western Sydney Int'l Airport as part of a new \$8 million fund established by the NSW Government, a figure which has been matched by WSI.

The WSI Take-Off Fund is aimed at encouraging more airlines to join Qantas, Jetstar and Singapore Airlines in operating from the new western gateway.

Incentives will include passenger subsidies and marketing support based on how many services and passengers airlines commit to carrying over a three-year residency at the airport, with the government aiming to hit a \$91 billion annual expenditure target.

"You only get to open a new airport once, that's why we're backing Western Sydney airport to land new routes and ensure this once-in-a-generation opportunity is a runaway success," said Minister for Jobs and Tourism, John Graham.

Silversea sails world

LUXURY cruise brand Silversea has launched its 2028 world cruise, which will set sail from Miami for the first time on 05 Jan.

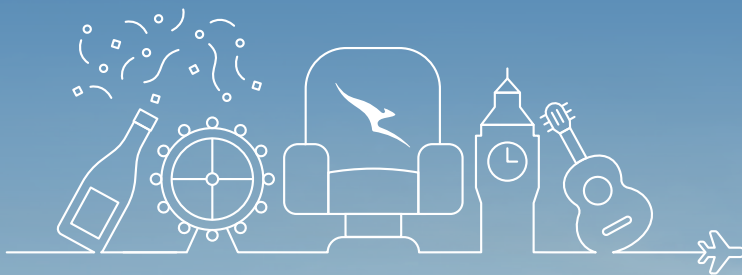
The 132-day voyage will open access to more than 30 UNESCO World Heritage sites for travellers, as *Silver Shadow* visits 58 ports across 29 countries.

After heading south through the Panama Canal, the world cruise will zig-zag between South America and Africa before heading north to the Arabian Gulf and back to the Mediterranean, concluding in Nice on 16 May.

The voyage will not visit Asia, Australia or the South Pacific.

Guests will also be able to enjoy special events onboard and onshore along with optional multi-day overland tours which leave the ship in one port and return in another.

Venetian Society members can now secure their place on the voyage, with general sales opening on 20 Mar.



Win your Qantas Supernova Seat



WIN your seat to Oasis Live '25 in Sydney and the ultimate UK adventure.

We're giving 15 lucky agents the chance to win corporate box seats to the sold-out Oasis Live '25 Sydney concert, including flights and accommodation.

Plus, in partnership with VisitBritain, the top five selling agents will also win return Premium Economy flights to the UK for a famil adventure in London and Manchester, the hometown of Oasis.

[Find out more](#)



*Competition closes 31 March 2025. T&Cs apply.



Travel Daily
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Japan to slug tourists

TOURISTS heading to Japan may soon be charged more to visit major attractions, as the country proposes to introduce a ‘two-tier’ pricing system from Jul. Locals will be charged less than foreign visitors under the scheme, in a bid to curb over-tourism.

Explore zooms past FY24

EXCLUSIVE

BOOKINGS in Australia for Explore Worldwide are tracking so well that the operator has already recorded over 70% of the volume of the last financial year, with eight months still to trade.

Speaking with **TD** this week, Regional Director ANZ, Ben Ittensohn, said the brand’s resonance in the market over the last couple of years has “surpassed expectations”.

Ittensohn added a major part of that success story has been down to agents, whose enthusiasm for booking adventure holidays has propelled sales Down Under.

“We are unique in focusing on that slightly more mature demographic of 40- to 60-year-olds who are culturally aware and are a more experienced traveller.”

Agent-driven bookings have also surged past the 50:50 mark in the last 12 months, with Ittensohn confident the skew will lean even more towards agents in the future.

Explore Worldwide’s top-selling destinations are currently Italy, Japan, Greece and Croatia. **AB**

Explora feeling well

TRAVELLERS can embark on one- and two-night health and wellbeing courses aboard Explora Journeys as part of the brand’s new Ocean Wellness Retreats.

The courses focus on energy, sleep and relaxation and take place on selected voyages in Mar & Apr.

AATKings

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AIR CREDIT
 per couple on selected tours*

*T&C's apply



Mirima National Park, near Kununurra

Cathay profit climbs

LOWER fuel prices and stronger passenger numbers have helped The Cathay Group post a HK\$9.9 billion (A\$2 billion) group-wide profit for full-year 2024.

The result, announced yesterday by the company, is up slightly from the HK\$9.8 billion reported last year, and marks its second successive year in the black.

Passenger volumes on Cathay Pacific and HK Express were up 30%, with yields stabilising as more flights were added to their respective networks.

Flagship brand Cathay Pacific saw a 30.6% increase in available seat kilometres, however a drop in average revenue per passenger also led to a 2.5% fall in average load factors - an 11.8% yield drop.

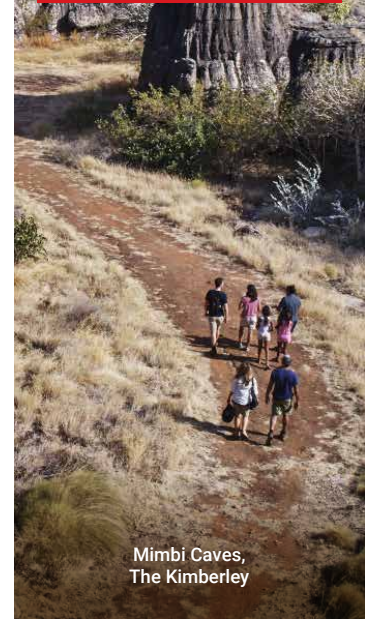
Cathay Group Chairman Patrick Healy said he was excited about the future and confident the carrier was sufficiently well placed to invest in new aircraft, routes and cabin products.

“Together, Cathay Pacific and HK Express will operate passenger services to more than 100 destinations around the world within this year,” Healy said.

AATKings

GET *up to* **\$1,800**
AIR CREDIT
 per couple on selected tours*

*T&C's apply



Mimbi Caves, The Kimberley

TTC brands commit

TRAFALGAR and Insight Vacations have announced more guaranteed tours than ever before, with over 3,700 departures locked in for 2025.

Insight Vacations’ ‘Best of Spain & Portugal’ features more than 40 definite departure dates through the end of the year, while Trafalgar’s ‘Best of Italy’ boasts 70-plus confirmed departures through until Dec.

Additionally, Trafalgar, Insight Vacations and Costsaver are currently offering up to 15% off select tours departing in the next four months.

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Don't cancel Queensland

HOSPITALITY giant Comiskey Group has joined with Visit Moreton Bay to urge travellers not to cancel plans to visit the region following Tropical Cyclone Alfred's crossing last week.

Comiskey Group co-founder and Director, Rob Comiskey, said the clean-up is now complete and the region is eager to welcome visitors back once again.



"The lead-up to the event was devastating, particularly for our resort at Sandstone, where occupancy rates dropped significantly - we saw hundreds of thousands of dollars' worth of cancellations," he said.

Visit Moreton Bay CEO Luke Edwards said travellers should keep their future bookings, with many tourism businesses on the island small operations that rely on visitors to survive.

"There are some areas still without power, but the majority of tourism operators [are] back online and open for business." *ML*

It is now JB's TIME

FAMOUS Central Australian rail journey The Ghan has been selected among *TIME Magazine's* 'World's Greatest Places' for 2025.

Journey Beyond Executive GM Justine Lally said she agreed The Ghan is an "icon of the outback".

The prestigious list features other Australian lodges and attractions including The Lodge Wadjemup on Rottnest Island and the new Bluey's World pop-up showcase in Brisbane.

Pedal for a cause

INTREPID has partnered with non-profit entity World Bicycle Relief to launch a cycle fundraising trip to Kenya.

Taking place from 29 May to 05 Jun 2025, the eight-day adventure will take up to 16 travellers through to the Rift Valley to Kisumu, starting in Nairobi.

Guests will spend three days cycling through Kenya's diverse landscapes, visiting villages to see the fundraising impact firsthand.

Before departing on the trip, travellers are required to raise \$2,500 for World Bicycle Relief, which equates to 10 bicycles delivered to communities through the program.

"Cyclists on this trip will experience firsthand the power that a simple bicycle can have in breaking down the barriers for communities to access basic needs like healthcare and education," said Biheng Zhang, GM of The Intrepid Foundation.

Find out more detail [HERE](#).

VN integrates Sabre

POTENTIAL new destinations in Australia and other countries has led Vietnam Airlines to invest in a major technology purchase from Sabre Corporation.

The carrier has opted to integrate Sabre's Network Planning and Optimisation tool to help facilitate its growth ambition.

Vietnam Airlines recently added new routes to Germany, India, Italy, the US and Philippines, and is exploring new destinations in the United States, Canada, Asia, Australia and Europe.

Further tech solutions being introduced will include Sabre's Fleet Manager product to match aircraft with demand, Profit Manager to maximise network profitability, and Schedule Manager to deliver more revenue-driven solutions.



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Window Seat

A POPULAR destination for families, Plantation Island Resort in Fiji has inspired a new children's book penned by Kiwi author Karen McMillan.

Elastic Island Adventures: Plantation Island Resort is the latest installment in the popular Elastic Island Adventures series.

The resort's GM, Rodney Samuels, said he hopes the tale inspires children and families to explore the island while respecting and preserving the environment.



Raffles eyes Aussie surge

EXCLUSIVE

BOOKINGS from Aussies for the newly opened all-villa luxury Raffles Sentosa Singapore have been strong - with plenty of interest in particular for the second half of the year.

Speaking with **TD** about the appeal of the property to Aussies, General Manager Cavaliere Giovanni Viterale (**pictured**) said the blend of nature, heritage and wellness will resonate with couples, families, and travellers seeking wellbeing stays.

"With the option to book interconnected villas, the resort is perfect for families, and we are the only resort in Singapore that offers up to six bedrooms connecting villas for...multi-generational groups, or an entourage of guests who wish to stay in privacy," he said.

The luxury property's chief added Australia is a key market of interest for Raffles, fuelled



by strong inbound travel to Singapore on long-haul flights.

There are many selling points to book, but for Viterale, the key pillars are culinary and wellness.

"Raffles Sentosa Singapore is the ultimate dining destination in the city, offering five exceptional restaurants and lounges, helmed by chefs with Michelin credentials," he enthused.

Meanwhile, wellbeing experiences include a combination of mindfulness, massage, fitness, hydrotherapy and spa treatments.

"Every detail, from the architecture to the treatments, is designed to evoke a sense of calm," Viterale said. **AB**

Travel Daily ON LOCATION



Brisbane

Today's issue of **TD** is coming to you courtesy of the **Luxury Travel Collection**, which is hosting us at its **Luxury Product Showcase and Global Business Owner's Soiree**.

IT'S Leadership Day and this morning, attendees at FCTG's LTC are hearing from an excellent lineup of speakers, sharing stories and insights.

First cab off the rank was Danielle Galloway, who discussed the power of leadership, followed by Colette Garnsey, Chair of Laser Clinics Global, who discussed how she built the luxury brand.

Later today, we'll also hear from Ponant CEO Deb Corbett about her journey of personal and professional growth.

Wander? Or wonder?

Polar bears can travel more than 1,000 km each year in search of food. Gain more insights about this icon of the Arctic on an expedition with HX, experts in voyages of discovery to Svalbard since 1896.



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CORPORATE UPDATE

TMCs see the logix of AI

MELBOURNE TMC brands FBI Travel and Rego Travel have signed long-term agreements with cloud-based business travel analytics business Travelogix, following its integration with the Tramada mid/back office system.

The agreements have seen FBI and Reho integrate a suite of Travelogix solutions into their operations, first going live with reporting platform Analytix at the start of this month.

Analytix uses AI platform ChatGPT's new data analysis tool to identify trends and patterns by aggregating, normalising and cleaning raw data.

Additionally, both TMCs will also integrate duty-of-care solutions GeoLocate and GeoAlert along with DataShare and DataValet.

Travelogix founder and Chief



Executive Officer Chris Lewis (pictured) said the company can now be considered a genuine player in the business travel technology game.

Lewis' comments were echoed by Reho Travel CEO Karsten Horne, who said the partnership with Travelogix was a big step forward in its data management and reporting capabilities.

"As a B-Corp accredited TMC, having accurate and robust sustainability data at our fingertips is not just important but also forms part of our identity concerning our green credentials as an organisation," Horne said.

"The reporting and data management enhancements we have made through our link up with Travelogix will benefit our customer base hugely, and we look forward to a long and innovative road ahead with Chris Lewis and the broader Travelogix team," he added.

FBI Travel Chief Executive Mark Chaskiel also praised the Travelogix team for their persistence in getting the integration with Tramada done.

"By choosing Travelogix as our reporting partner, we have achieved both while introducing a best-in-market solution.

"Their ability to understand the nuances of our industry and seamlessly integrate with our office software has positioned us uniquely," Chaskiel added.

Tramada Senior Product Manager Nelson da Silva said he was proud to partner with Travelogix to deliver Analytix to support its agency partners. *ML*

Back face-to-face

AN EMPHASIS on in-person meetings and industry events has been cited as a key driver in a resurgent business travel sector.

The key finding from a new *SAP Concur Global Business Travel Survey* has identified a balance between cost management and building in-person relationships.

According to the SAP report, companies were planning industry events and meetings around the peak months of Jan, Feb, Apr, Jul and Dec.

Despite this, fluctuating airfares in line with demand led to a spike in ticket sales from Dec 2023 to Jan 2024, with a further 49% lift in Feb before a 25% fall in Mar.

"SAP Concur's *Global Business Travel Survey* found that 76% of global business travellers enjoy business trips, and 67% believe travel is critical for career growth," said SAP Concur Australia and New Zealand MD, Jonathan Beeby.

International airfare sales followed a similar path, with sales peaking from Dec 23 to Jan 24 and climbing again in Feb, with fares remaining consistent all year.

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Tahiti taps Aussie potential



LUX Voyages' brand Tahiti Voyages hosted Air Tahiti executives at an exclusive industry discussion in Sydney on Wed night, off the back of strong growth in the Australian market.

Lux Voyages Director Julia Li invited Air Tahiti Nui CEO Mathieu Bechonnet, VP Commercial Vaitea Kohler, and General Manager Grant Sinclair to the Royal Motor Yacht Club of NSW, where the group focused on Tahiti Voyages' plans and the challenges of the Australian market.

The discussion highlighted growing travel trends and opportunities, providing Air Tahiti Nui with valuable insights from Australian Tahiti wholesalers and reinforcing the airline's

commitment to the local market.

Li commented, "Tahiti is no longer just a honeymoon destination - it has become an everyday escape".

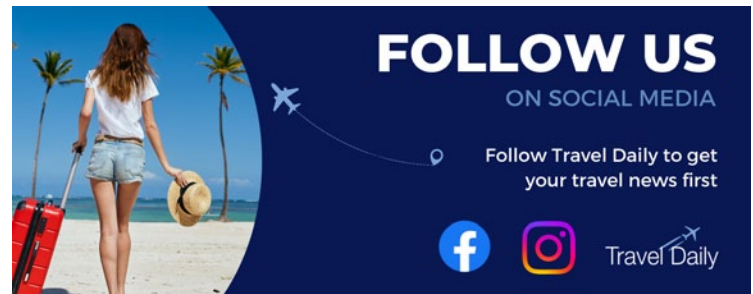
"Since COVID, people are prioritising their wellbeing and lifestyle, [and] many of our customers travel to Tahiti simply to celebrate life.

"More travellers - whether young couples, families or even solo adventurers - are choosing to visit Tahiti earlier in life rather than waiting until their 50s." *JM*

Pictured from front left clockwise: Bechonnet; Sinclair, Kohler; Vesna Letic, Air Tahiti Nui Account Manager; Jeremie Jezequel, Tahiti Voyages Sales and Marketing Manager; and Li.

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Aircalin has launched its 'Discover New Caledonia Sale' today, with flights from Brisbane to Noumea from \$539 return and from Sydney to Noumea from \$569 return, available until 28 Mar. More info [HERE](#).

Travellers can enjoy Easter deals on luxury villas in Thailand and Bali, thanks to **Elite Havens**, which is offering up to 35% off for stays of 14 nights or more, while those booking for 30+ nights can take advantage of a 50% discount at select villas. The deal includes properties like the six-bedroom Villa Canggu located just 100 metres from the beach, or Villa Aiko, which features four bedrooms and views across the Bukit Peninsula. Availability is limited - find more details [HERE](#).

The Porter House Hotel Sydney MGallery has created a package for wine, cheese and luxury lovers. The 'Chardon-yay Stay' package includes a curated chardonnay wine and cheese pairing at Handpicked Gallery Door, followed by an overnight stay at the five-star boutique hotel. The offer is available from \$359 per night for one or \$419 for two guests - bookings can be made [HERE](#).

Aussie travellers can snag cheaper airfares to selected destinations across **Singapore Airline's** global network, thanks to its 'Autumn Take Off 2025' promotion. Return economy prices start from \$878 to Shanghai, with the sale on until 02 Apr, for travel between 08 May 2025 and 22 Mar 2026. Agents can access the fare sheets [HERE](#).

Tourism Noosa has launched a raft of travel deals encouraging visitors to return to the destination following Tropical Cyclone Alfred. Local operators are offering savings across accommodation, experiences, and car hire - for example, travellers can score a 25% discount on stays at Noosa Lakes Resort during Mar, or enjoy 15% off glamping at Habitat Noosa Everglades EcoCamp. There are also deals available on Discovery K'Gari Adventures day tours, sunset cruises, spa treatments, bike and kayak tours, a dolphin safari experience, surfboard hire, and much more. For full details, [CLICK HERE](#).

Travellers can snap up extra savings on **Travelmarvel** itineraries for a limited time, as part of the operator's 'Final Call 2025 Sale'. Running from 13 Mar to 02 Apr 2025, the promotion offers an additional \$600 off per couple on top of existing offers for any Travelmarvel tour of eight days or more departing this year. The sale covers a range of river and coastal cruises, land journeys, and rail tours - find out more [HERE](#).

Oaks Hotels, Resorts & Suites is offering a complimentary honeymoon for couples who say 'I do' at select properties across Australia and New Zealand. Couples who meet the minimum spend on their wedding ceremony or reception at participating Oaks properties will receive a five-night stay at a Minor Hotels property of choice in Thailand, plus return economy flights for two. See the 'Vows to Vacay' deal [HERE](#).

Korean Air's shiny new look



KOREAN Air unveiled its new corporate identity at its headquarters in Seoul this week.

The carrier revealed its first logo change in 41 years, with the updated design retaining the airline's unique identity while embracing a more modern look.

Korean Air also pulled the curtains back on its new aircraft livery, with new design featured on a Boeing 787-10.

While preserving its signature sky-blue colour, the artwork

now features an enlarged logo and symbol, and the traditional cheatline has been replaced by a flowing curve that sweeps across the fuselage.

"As a unified Korean Air, we are committed to more than just transportation - we aim to connect people, cultures and the world through the skies," said Walter Cho ([pictured](#)), CEO of Hanjin Group and Korean Air.

He added the airline's role as Korea's flagship is more important than ever, after it bought Asiana Airlines ([TD 13 Dec 2024](#))

Meanwhile, the carrier has also introduced its newly upgraded inflight menu. [JM](#)

AA asks for review

AMERICAN Airlines has asked the US Supreme Court to overturn a decision to block a planned Northeast Alliance with JetBlue which would allow it to coordinate airfares, co-promote flights and share revenue.

The proposed partnership between the two airlines was terminated 18 months ago after a Federal Court ruled it would be anti-competitive and result in higher fares on flights from New York and Boston ([TD 07 Jul 2023](#)).

After failing in its appeal effort to overturn the ruling, American Airlines is now seeking leave for the matter to be heard in the Supreme Court, claiming antitrust laws were incorrectly interpreted.

JFK to upgrade T5

A REDESIGNED centre concourse highlighting New York City's famous parks will headline a refreshed presence for US airline Jetblue at New York JFK.

The space, which begins a phased opening later this year, will feature more than 40 new locally owned retail outlets and nearly 20 new F&B outlets.

Travellers will also be able to access green spaces, park benches, chess tables and admire more than 30 commissioned works from New York artists.

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