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Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today features eight pages of news, plus a cover wrap from **Tourism New Zealand**, our **Sustainability** page, and full pages from:

- G'Day Group
- Inspiring Vacations

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ATIA AAC noms open

THE Australian Travel Industry Association (ATIA) has opened nominations for its Accreditation Advisory Committee (AAC).

The panel plays a pivotal role in ensuring that the Australian Travel Accreditation Scheme (ATAS) continues to uphold the highest standards of integrity, trust and professionalism across the travel sector - for more information, **CLICK HERE**.

Super typhoon

SUPER Typhoon Fung-wong is forecast to move to Taiwan, as it leaves more than 1.4m displaced and at least eight people dead in the Philippines.

Meanwhile, seven airports in the Bicol region have been closed since Sun morning, and flight cancellations may continue until Wed.

More than 6,000 people were stranded across 86 ports on Mon.

Brendan reveals growth plans

THE Travel Corporation's Brendan Vacations brand, which *Travel Daily* revealed will be expanding into Australia (*TD* yesterday), has a range of other growth plans in the works.

Neil Rodgers, MD of Brendan's GSA Adventure World, told *TD* he is open to bringing in dedicated sales team members for the Celtic specialist.

Product expansion is already underway, particularly into the traditional, less-travelled Celtic regions such as Brittany, and the rest of the United Kingdom.

"It is in development phase," Rodgers confirmed.

Also on the Adventure World head's wish list is barging on Ireland's Shannon River.

"There's certainly another wealth of product lines that we can explore, but what we're bringing to market is pretty comprehensive," he added.

The Australian travel industry



will have the opportunity to meet with Brendan Managing Director Catherine Reilly, in May, when she makes her first visit to Australia since her brand's debut Down Under.

Her trip will coincide with St Brendan's Day - the patron saint of travellers - and will see the brand embark on its first Aussie roadshow, supported by Tourism Ireland and VisitScotland. *MS*

South America deals

INSPIRING Vacations is offering Black Friday deals of up to 20% off tours in South America - see **page 10** for details.

Together, we go further

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Hurry, competition closes 11.59pm (AEST) 28 November 2025.

*Terms and conditions apply.

Exclusivity awaits

THE adults-only El Questro Homestead in WA's beautiful Ord River Valley is offering guests a stay four nights, pay three deal.

Included are premium Australian wines, gourmet meals, and selected experiences in the local area - details on **page nine**.

AGENT INCENTIVE

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page 1



Watch and win NY

AUSTRALIAN and New Zealand agents are invited to complete New York State's Watch & Win webinar training incentive.

Live now until 31 Dec, agents will go in the running to win luxury luggage from Aussie travel brand July when they tune in and answer some destination questions.

One lucky winner will take home the major prize of a personalised 80l checked July suitcase, while two runners-up will each receive carry-on July cases - learn more and participate [HERE](#).

TC opens the doors

TRAVELLERS Choice has announced it will allow non-members to attend its Preferred Supplier Exhibition, with the aim of helping independent travel agents connect with suppliers.

The exhibition will take place on Sat 29 Nov during the network's conference in Melbourne, with non-members also able to attend that day's conference sessions.

MD Christian Hunter said, "Given the ongoing pressures around staff recruitment and retention, we know many independent agents struggle to find the time or opportunities to meet face-to-face with suppliers."

"Throwing open the doors to our Preferred Supplier Exhibition will give agents a chance to connect with leading travel companies and tourism organisations."

Travel agency owners who wish to attend can email their details to events@travellerschoice.com.au.

SQ is Aussies' top brand

SINGAPORE Airlines has dominated Finder's 2025 Customer Satisfaction Awards, winning seven categories including most loved, top value and most reliable airline.

"Overall, Aussies have snubbed Australian airlines and rewards programs for international alternatives," noted Graham Cooke, head of consumer research at Finder.

Flight Centre Group's brands scooped up all the travel agency awards, with Travel Associates recognised as most loved, most trusted and for its legendary service.

The group also won awards for most recommended and top

value in the agency awards.

Skyscanner was rated as most loved in the travel planning tool awards, while Trivago was picked for top value and Booking.com was most recommended.

Meanwhile, Flight Centre won most trusted and top rated rewards and offers.

Among frequent flyer programs, Emirates Skywards, Air New Zealand Airpoints, Kris Flyer and Cathay Pacific were all recognised.

Finder's awards are based on feedback from more than 60,000 Aussie consumers who rate brands across metrics such as trust, value and whether they would recommend it to friends and family. *JHM*

JOIN OUR JOURNEY

ATAC MEMBER ACQUISITION MANAGER

The Australian Travel Agents Co-operative (ATAC) is expanding and seeking a dynamic Acquisition Manager to champion the growth of its community of independent travel agents and entrepreneurs.

This newly created role will focus on identifying and onboarding new member agencies, strengthening relationships across the travel industry, and supporting ATAC's mission to empower independent businesses through shared strength, collaboration, and purpose.

The ideal candidate will have proven business development experience within the travel sector, exceptional relationship-building skills, and a genuine passion for helping independent travel entrepreneurs grow and succeed.

Location: Flexible (hybrid/remote options available)

Applications close: 28 November 2025

[→ Click here to apply](#)

ATAC
Australian Travel Agents Co-op

Black Fri with G

CLIENTS can save up to 30% on hundreds of G Adventures trips worldwide for travel before 30 Apr 2026, including the 12-day 'Vietnam Family Adventure'.

The Black Fri sale ends 30 Nov, and includes 10% savings on trips departing 01 May-30 Aug 2026.

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Window Seat

SOME may have scoffed at the term 'coolcation' when it entered the lexicon last year, but it has now landed on the Collins Dictionary's Word of the Year shortlist.

Other interesting travel-related words that also made the list include HENRY (high earner, not rich yet) and micro-retirements (career breaks between periods of employment to pursue personal interests such as taking bucket-list holidays).

Explore Worldwide recently predicted that micro-retirements (or 'radical sabbaticals') are also on the rise and according to a survey run by the brand, more than half of respondents said they would take unpaid leave to take a break to recharge.

Luxury cruising on show

THE Cruise Centre by Travelcall and Main Beach Travel (part of the Goldman Travel Group) have wrapped up their first ever Luxury Cruise Showcase in Brisbane.

Held at the luxurious Emporium Hotel, the event featured showcases from cruise lines including AmaWaterways, Celebrity Cruises, Crystal, Oceania Cruises, Ponant Explorations, Regent Seven Seas Cruises, Seabourn, Silversea, The Ritz-Carlton Yacht Collection, Tauck and Viking.

Meanwhile, guests chatted with cruise specialists about exclusive offers and itineraries.

Another session, which was created in partnership with The Luxury Network, included a presentation on travel trends from Anthony Goldman, Joint Managing Director at Goldman Travel Group.

Following that was a fireside chat on the future of modern



luxury cruising with Elizabeth Clarke, Director of Cruise at Goldman Travel Group, and Mandy Dwyer, Director at Main Beach Travel.

"Luxury cruise is evolving, and our goal is to connect clients with experiences that truly inspire them," said Goldman.

"The event highlighted the diversity of today's cruise experiences, from intimate river voyages to extraordinary polar explorations."

Pictured: Anthony Goldman, Elizabeth Clarke, Mandy Dwyer and Mike Dwyer. *JHM*

CATO Xmas backers

THE Council of Australian Tour Operators (CATO) has announced the major co-sponsors for the 2025 CATO Christmas Lunch, taking place Thu 04 Dec at the Sheraton Grand Sydney Hyde Park.

Brands supporting the event this year include Abercrombie & Kent, Bunnik Tours, Collette, G Adventures, Inside Travel Group, Intrepid, Keith Prowse Travel, Sun Island Tours, and Travel Puglia and Tours of Tuscany.

Each major co-sponsor's contribution includes a donation to the Prostate Cancer Foundation of Australia through CATO MD Brett Jardine's ongoing fundraising campaign (*TD 29 Sep*).

"The way our members and industry partners have rallied together this year is truly inspiring," Jardine said.

"It shows the strength of our community and the values that unite us beyond business."

There are a limited number of tickets remaining - **CLICK HERE**.

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New bites at LST

LAUNCESTON Airport has announced the opening of Kanamaluka cafe, marking a key milestone in the Tasmanian hub's terminal transformation.

Named after the Aboriginal word for Tamar River, Kanamaluka cafe's all-day dining menu includes an array of Tasmanian local produce including local pastries, honey, jams, and a big breakfast complete with Tasmanian sausage.

Operated by SSP, the new cafe offers airfield views and will serve a record number of travellers as the airport celebrates two of its busiest months on record, servicing almost a quarter of a million travellers in Sep and Oct.



Hilton beefs up team

HILTON has welcomed four new commercial executives to boost its leadership team in Australasia.

These include Rebecca Williams, Regional Director, Hilton Worldwide Sales, Australasia, and Elena Fragasso, Director of International Sales, Australasia (pictured).

They are joined by Ivy Zhang, Director of Sales & Marketing, Hilton Sydney, and Mahasin Balfour, Commercial Director Cairns Cluster, Australasia.

The new execs will oversee the hotel brand's strategic commercial initiatives, strengthen partnerships across key markets, and accelerate revenue growth, said Hilton.

"Hilton's growth trajectory in Australasia continues to be incredibly strong, and these appointments will enable us to further accelerate our commercial performance," said Daniella Tonetto, Senior Regional



Commercial Director, Australasia.

"Each of these leaders brings deep expertise, global perspective, and a forward-thinking mindset that will help us unlock new opportunities, strengthen our market position, and drive sustainable, long-term growth."

Hilton was also named the best place to work in Australia, landing at the top of the country's Great Places to Work list, with 88% of its 1,000 team members saying they enjoy its workplace culture. *JHM*

NatGeo grows river

NATIONAL Geographic-Lindblad Expeditions has announced an expanded 2027-28 season for its growing collection of river cruise itineraries, emphasising Lindblad Expeditions' continued investment in small-ship exploration along the world's most storied waterways.

With itineraries spanning Egypt, India, Vietnam and Europe, the 2027-28 season marks the most expansive lineup of river itineraries to date.

Connect will continue to sail down Amsterdam's canals and through the French countryside, while sister ship *Evolve* will join the fleet for new European Christmas experiences, extending the co-brand's season into winter for the first time.

"For us, exploration isn't just about where we travel, but how deeply we connect - with places, with cultures, and with one another," said Natalya Leahy, CEO, Lindblad Expeditions.

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*Terms and conditions apply. Valid 8 November to 5 December, 2025 or until sold out.

Swapping out politics for pedals

WESTERN Australia's former Minister for Culture and the Arts, David Templeman, is set to lead a new e-bike tour operated by The Bike Kiosk.

The 90-minute 'Magical Mandurah with the Minister' ride is described as "part comedy show, part history lesson, and part outdoor adventure", taking travellers through Mandurah's foreshore and city centre.

Running fortnightly on Sundays, the tour - which will see Templeman don a range of quirky costumes - will end with a seafood feast at Cicerello's.

The experience costs \$190, with 15% savings available until the end of 2025 - book [HERE](#).



Eagle takes flight

GOLDEN Eagle Luxury Trains has announced four additional European departures for 2026, now available to book.

All taking place on board the Golden Eagle Danube Express, the luxurious rail journeys include the 11-day Grand Alpine Express departing from Budapest on 01 May and new dates in Sep and Oct on the Paris to Istanbul (or vice versa) route.

There is also now an extra date for the seven-day 'Castles of Transylvania' tour, scheduled for May, Sep and Oct.

Guests will visit medieval fortresses and castles and even enjoy a gala dinner inside the walls of Bran Castle.

"We have seen many departures fully booked well in advance, so we are thrilled to add these new dates," enthused Australasian BDM Megan Bardsley.

"The expansion allows more travellers the opportunity to book these sought after journeys."

A big splash in Alice



DISCOVERY Parks has recently unveiled a new \$10 million tourism development in Alice Springs, a family-friendly property with 14 deluxe cabins and the largest waterpark in its national portfolio.

The Discovery Parks development is expected to generate an additional 27,000 visitor nights and up to \$8 million in annual economic benefit.

"We're excited to deliver an exceptional new experience

for guests visiting Alice Springs, enhancing the appeal of Discovery Parks as the region's premier holiday park," said Discovery Parks founder and CEO Grant Wilckens.

"This development will support increased visitation to Central Australia and reflects our confidence in NT tourism."

The company said it has spent more than \$100 million on upgrades to its NT properties in the past five years.

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Advisors on top in NZ



1000 Mile Travel Group's best agents recently took part in the network's annual five-day Australian Top Achievers Trip in New Zealand.

During their time together, the advisors experienced firsthand some of the country's best adventures and attractions, including the iconic SkyTower and a luxurious stay at the Horizon Hotel in Auckland.

Guests were also treated to an exclusive behind-the-scenes tour of Air New Zealand's hangar 22 and future cabin aircraft experience, where engineers chatted with them about the carrier's upcoming developments and shared how they prepare an aircraft for passengers.

Next, the agents were given a guided tour around Rosewood Kauri Cliffs, featuring three private beaches, expansive grounds and villas with panoramic ocean and golf course views.

Highlights of the week were a helicopter tour of the Bay of Islands and a luxury yacht cruise on board *Silver Wave* with chef-prepared meals.

In the Northland, the agents enjoyed a stargazing experience with Kora Tours New Zealand and visited Marsden Estate Winery.

"We had a wonderful Top Achievers trip to New Zealand - we were looked after superbly by Air New Zealand, Rosewood Estate Kauri Cliffs, and the Horizon Sky City Auckland... loved all of it!" said Sam Rowe, 1000MTG top corporate expert.

"I had the privilege of playing one of the top 50 golf courses in the world; we had helicopter trips, cruises, wonderful food and scenery, and a trip to the Air NZ design centre." *JHM*

Pictured: 1000 Mile Travel Group's top achievers on board the luxurious *Silver Wave*.

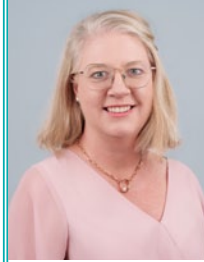
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ATIA UPDATE

from Nina Hedges, Compliance Manager



IN MY role, I speak with travel business leaders every day, and one thing is always

clear - they are busy.

Between serving clients, managing teams, and navigating constant change, it is easy to stay focused on what is directly ahead.

But sometimes the most valuable thing a business can do is pause and look up - to see the bigger picture of how it's really performing and how it stacks up across the industry.

Later this month, ATIA will release its annual Enterprise Financial Benchmarking Reports, created to give our members that rare opportunity - backed by real data - to gain perspective and plan for lasting success.

Each report is individually tailored to the member's own business, drawing on verified financial information submitted by ATIA Accredited members.

These personalised insights reveal how a business is performing across key financial indicators, comparing results

with peers in similar cohorts and industry segments.

Additionally, the information highlights strengths, uncover opportunities for improvement, and turn data into actionable intelligence and practical guidance for the road ahead.

The reports allow members to pause and see the full picture of how their business stacks up.

In the rush of daily operations, that kind of reflection can be hard to find - especially when access to the data is limited.

This broader perspective helps inform decisions that drive stronger and more sustainable growth.

With a rich history at the heart of Australia's travel industry, ATIA is proud to provide both current and historical insights that help shape our collective future.

These reports are our way of saying 'thank you' to our members - a genuine expression of appreciation for their ongoing support.

Without our members, we couldn't do what we do every day: advocating for our sector, representing our collective interests, and ensuring the voice of the travel industry is heard loud and clear.

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TOURISM AND MARINE SCIENCE UNITE

TOURISM operators, conservationists, Traditional Owners and scientists came together at the Great Barrier Reef over the weekend to celebrate five years of collaboration under the banner of the Reef Cooperative.

The group (pictured) gathered onboard *Reef Magic*, a marine science and tourism pontoon on Moore Reef, for the annual coral spawning event, when the corals burst into life in an underwater 'snowstorm' by releasing trillions of eggs and sperm into the water in a mass breeding phenomenon.

This year, the Reef Cooperative partners - which include tourism operator Experience Co - worked together on Moore Reef collecting data for the Great Reef Census, restoring coral by installing MARRS Reef Stars,



and conducting coral larvae re-seeding with the University of Technology Sydney.

Tourists can get involved in the Reef Cooperative's conservation efforts by joining CBR Biology's Reef Recovery Days, launched earlier this year.

The full-day trips out to the *Reef Magic* pontoon or on the company's Dreamtime Dive and

Snorkel tours allow guests to offer hands-on assistance with coral recovery on the Great Barrier Reef.

The initiative highlights how tourism and marine sciences work together for reef restoration and conservation, combining local knowledge, visitor engagement, industry know-how and cutting-edge research to safeguard the unique ecosystems. *JM*

Maldives targets eco projects

THE Maldives has introduced sustainable townships in an effort to diversify its tourism sector and attract next-generation projects, including in key areas of premium real estate tourism, wellness and medical services, and education-focused travel.

In proposed amendments to the Special Economic Zones (SEZ) Act, the new sustainable township category aims to establish the Maldives as a destination for long-stay visitors and high-value investors.

Developers will receive limited, time-bound incentives, including a 5% income tax rate for the first 10 years and 10% for the following decade.

To qualify for incentives, developments need to exceed US\$500 million (A\$767 million), and must include educational facilities, healthcare infrastructure, food security initiatives, and renewable energy projects.

The reforms are part of the Maldives' Vision 2040 strategy, and are intended to complement traditional resorts rather than replace them, adding new revenue streams and keeping up with global tourism trends.

JW goes green

JW MARRIOTT Gold Coast Resort & Spa has become the first Marriott International property in Queensland to achieve Ecotourism Australia's Sustainable Tourism Certification.

The recognition highlights the property's environmental initiatives, including JW Garden, where organic waste from the kitchen is composted to produce fertiliser for seasonally grown crops.

South Africa boosts conservation skills

SOUTH African National Parks (SANParks) has partnered with not-for-profit organisation, the Good Work Foundation (GWF), to boost access to conservation education and create job opportunities for young locals who live close to national parks.

GWF already operates five campuses in the Mpumalanga province, providing digital education to school children and skills-based training to young job seekers.

SANParks, which manages 21



national parks, will work with GWF to expand the latter's education and skills training model to rural and township communities surrounding several of these parks, starting with the Greater Kruger National Park.

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Travel Daily

MONEY

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

AU\$1 = US\$0.654

THE Australian dollar has surged against the USD this week, boosted by comments from the Reserve Bank of Australia Deputy Governor Andrew Hauser, who stressed the need to maintain tight conditions to damper inflation. In late Oct, the ABS reported that the inflationary pressures rose at a faster pace of 1.3%, against 0.7% growth seen in the second quarter.

Wholesale rates this morning.

US	\$0.654
UK	£0.496
NZ	\$1.158
Euro	€0.566
Japan	¥100.7
Thailand	฿21.13
China	¥4.654
South Africa	11.21
Canada	\$0.916
Bitcoin	161,600.92

Taronga's wild sale

TARONGA Zoo is offering great savings for Black Friday, including 30% off accommodation at its Wildlife retreat and 20% off winter bookings for Roar and Snore experiences.

Meanwhile, Keeper for a Day passes are now 20% off for adults, and fees for short courses like wildlife photography, reptile care and animal training have also been slashed by 20%.

For more information on the Black Friday sale, **CLICK HERE**.

West Beach rises to fame



WEST Beach Parks has been inducted into the South Australian Tourism Award Hall of Fame, off the back of winning Best Caravan and Holiday Park for the third year in a row.

Other inductees included d'Arenberg, The Big Duck Boat Tours, Copper Trails Bike Hire, Spirit of the Coorong, Seppeltsfield Barossa, Ibis Adelaide and Adelaide Fringe.

"To be recognised alongside so many iconic South Australian tourism operators is an incredible honour," West Beach Parks CEO Kate Anderson said.

"Our guests return year after year because they know they'll find something new to enjoy, while still experiencing that same sense of welcome that makes our holiday park feel like home."

This year, West Beach Parks has expanded to include a new kiosk, on-site dining options, a QR-coded coffee service delivering beverages to guests' doors, and 'surprise and delight' moments to celebrate visitors' milestones.

The holiday park will soon start using sustainable bedding and

welcome a new toddler pool, splash zone and outdoor cinema space this summer.

West Beach can accommodate up to 3,000 guests across 338 caravan and tent sites, and includes 132 self-catering cabins and a luxury three-bedroom beach house. *JHM*

Pictured: The West Beach Parks team raise a toast to their win.

APT backs Dragon

APT Travel Group is now funding a new centre for non-profit Blue Dragon Children's Foundation in Ho Chi Minh City to support disadvantaged youth and street kids.

The travel operator is offering support through its OneTomorrow Charitable Fund, which has contributed more than \$450,000 to the organisation since 2019.

The space welcomes 150 kids a week, offering literacy, numeracy, English and creative workshops, as well as life skills and counselling.

It also acts as an operational base for Blue Dragons' team of social workers, psychologists and staff in the city, as they offer support to children at risk of exploitation and homelessness.

"From rescuing children from trafficking to providing education and shelter, Blue Dragon continues to demonstrate what compassion in action truly looks like," said COO Lorna Heyward.

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