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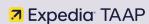


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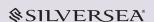


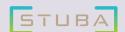














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Travel Daily First with the news

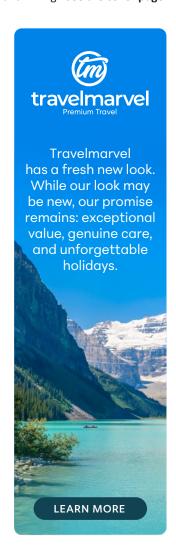
Thursday 9th October 2025



Thanks from ATIA

THE Australian Travel Industry Association (ATIA) is thanking its sponsors of this year's National Travel Industry Awards.

Leading the way is major sponsor Singapore Airlines along with key partners such as CVFR and Viking - see the cover page.



Riyadh Air takes off

A NEW Saudi-backed carrier that has aspirations to connect Australia to its network will take off on its debut flight from Riyadh to Heathrow on 26 Oct.

Riyadh Air CEO Tony Douglas made the announcement overnight, fulfilling the airline's commitment to take to the air before the end of the year.

Dubai will be connected as the second hub, with additional routes to be revealed in the coming weeks for 2025 and 2026.

Saudi Arabia has long-touted Riyadh Air as a key piece of the puzzle in unlocking the tourism potential of the previously isolated kingdom.

"This isn't just a launch, it is...a core pillar of our Saudi Vision 2030," Douglas enthused.

"This carefully sequenced approach is our pathway to perfect, and we are now incredibly close to full operations with further destinations to be announced [soon] as our new aircraft are delivered."

Riyadh Air has 182 planes on order, comprised of A321neos, B787-9s, and A350-1000 the largest ever placed by a commercial start-up carrier.

Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today features seven pages of industry news including our Business Events **News** page, a cover wrap from ATIA, plus a full page from CLIA Memberships.



Alongside its launch announcement, Riyadh Air also revealed details of its debut loyalty program, Sfeer.

Early registration for the program is now open HERE, with early adopters to join an exclusive group called The Founders, which will offer priority access to bookings on future flights, along with other benefits set to be announced soon.

Confirmed benefits include the ability to share points with friends and family to enhance membership levels, a 'no points expiry policy', and gamified challenges to earn perks.

Riyadh Air has hinted Australia is part of its expansion plan once it has enough planes. AB

Win a Med cruise

CLIA and MSC Cruises are giving member agents a chance to win a seven-night Mediterranean cruise as part of Cruise Month 2025.

Agents who book and deposit a 2026 Med or northern Europe booking with MSC Cruises before 31 May will go into the draw.

The winner will receive a balcony stateroom on any of 14 MSC ships sailing the Med in 2026 or 2027, plus a Premium Extra drinks package.

More details HERE.

Join CLIA in 2026

JOIN Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA) in 2026, and access exclusive benefits and the support needed to make the most of the sector's success.

Members can also earn rewards on their cruise bookings - see page eight for more information.







15 September - 10 October 2025

Royal Brunei Airlines will increase BSP commission to 6%

Contact melrba@rba.com.bn or your consolidator for further details. Terms and conditions apply.









Window

THE matriarch of the worldfamous tourist attraction Dollywood has reassured her legions of fans she is not dead.

Dolly Parton took to social media to state "I don't think God is through with me, and I ain't done working", after her sister sparked panic by asking fans to pray for her health.

"There are just a lot of rumours flying around, but I figured if you heard it from me, you'd know that I was okay," Parton added.

Outside of her storied music and acting career, Parton's Dollywood in Tennessee attracts around 3.5 million visitors a year.

NYC playing with Luxury

NEW York City Tourism + Conventions has partnered with Luxury Escapes to showcase the city's five boroughs in a new campaign leading up to the 2026 FIFA World Cup.

Now live, the 'Where the World Comes to Play' pitch will be themed around football, nightlife, shopping and other activities available across the city, with iconic attractions such as the Statue of Liberty to appear prominently during the campaign.

Advertisements will run in Sydney, Adelaide, Perth and 20 other global markets, with Luxury Escapes to develop a range of travel packages featuring the city.

"As the city prepares to host eight FIFA World Cup games, including the final, we know Australian travellers will be



drawn to New York and its five fabulous boroughs, not only for the football but for their unparalleled mix of culture, dining, entertainment and energy that have long made New York one of the world's most exciting destinations," said Luxury Escapes co-founder & CEO Adam Schwab.

United Airlines is an official partner of NYC Tourism in Australia and will also collaborate during the campaign with sales missions, travel trade training, familiarisation trips and more.

New York City last year welcomed 64.5 million visitors from around the world, including 509,000 from Australia. ML

Demand for Croatia

SMALL-SHIP cruising operator

The company said it has already sold more than 50% of its 2026

inventory, with nearly half of all

departures in Sep fully booked.

Unforgettable Croatia added

the average itinerary value has also increased year-on-year, with

mean booking values sitting at

around \$15,000, largely due to

their cruises with hotel stays and

Australian travellers coupling

Unforgettable Croatia said sales

from Australia last month were up 72% on the year prior, marking

a new record in this market.



HIGH-SPEED rail is coming

to India, with a section of the

Ahmedabad to open in 2027.

provide two of its Shinkansen

bullet trains to India to operate

Japan has inked a deal to

first route linking Mumbai and

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Next-gen selling

AS CONSUMERS are

increasingly turning to agents, selling strategies need to evolve, according to industry experts.

On Travel Agent Day Australia last week, several travel leaders were part of a panel discussion focusing on the new way agents need to cater to travellers.

"In an age where you can book a holiday package at Aldi or get a detailed itinerary in seconds from AI, if you aren't evolving with the needs of consumers - listening, creating a human connection and building a relationship, and personalising your recommendations for the client - you've already been left behind," said Travel Agent Finder owner Anna Shannon.

Now that savvy clients have information at their fingertips, selling dream holidays is tough, and according to Crooked Compass' Lisa Pagotto, "the playing field hasn't just shifted, it's been cracked wide open".

"Agents used to be gatekeepers of information," she said.

"Now, they need to be the curators of meaning."

However, there are some underutilised opportunities for agents, Shannon pointed out.

Agents have the ability to become online content creators, showcasing their experiences through social media or on their websites and sharing it with their own customer database.

"You don't need to even ask for the sale, but you'll get interest, engagement and enquiry."

Biggest Luxperience yet



THIS week's annual Luxperience travel event is the biggest yet, with attendee numbers up and a long list of suppliers waiting at the gate for next year.

ICC Sydney is playing host to 160 global and national travel brands this week, who will meet with a select group of buyers.

Partner numbers for this year's Luxperience event are up 20% from last year, **Event Director Lynn Ormiston** confirmed to Travel Daily, while buyer numbers are also up an impressive 16%.

Among the increased volumes is 65% new products at this year's event, which Ormiston said is key to ensuring attendees are presented with a unique and compelling proposition each year.

"They love coming here, with the relaxed atmosphere [and] oneon-one meetings," she enthused.

New attendees at Luxperience this year include a delegation from Sri Lanka, arriving in Australia for their first-ever visit to the market.

Also popular at this year's Luxperience are Visit Rwanda and New Caledonia, renewing its presence in the market after a number of years away. MS

Pictured are Luxperience Marketing Consultant Joanne Ma, Lynn Ormiston, and Buyer Manager Lauren Dunemann.

Inset: Abercrombie & Kent Sri Lanka Director Gayangi Wirasinha with Bicton Product Manager Alison Haley and A&K Sales Director Alexa Papoulias.

AAT Kings big saving

AAT Kings is offering savings of up to \$2,200 per couple on selected classic and small group tours departing in 2026 and 2027.

The promotion is valid for bookings taken until 30 Jan 2026 for departures between 01 Jan 2026 and 31 Mar 2027.

Applicable classic tours include AAT Kings' 'Great Ocean Road & Kangaroo Island' itinerary, as well as its small group Milford Sound overnight cruise.

COMO makes it two

COMO Hotels and Resorts has been named as the operator of an upcoming hotel located on St Kilda Road in Melbourne.

Slated to open in early 2028, the \$300 million property will mark the hotel brand's second in Australia, after launching COMO The Treasury in Perth in 2015.

Occupying the first nine levels of Orchard Piper's The Carter Building, the hotel will offer 102 rooms, including a selection of custom-designed family suites.

Further features will include a large COMO Shambhala wellness zone, fitness centre, and a 20-metre indoor lap pool.







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Travel Daily

WA gets slammed

WRESTLING superstars from WWE have touched down in Perth for three nights of action that will be available to watch in one billion households globally.

Supported by the WA Government, the events will see a range of city-wide attractions pop up across Perth, including a merchandise store and fan events to see names such as John Cena and Aussie star, Rhea Ripley.

The tour is expected to generate millions in visitor spend and boost the local accommodation and hospitality sectors.

Silversea sales SVP

FORMER Azamara President Carol Cabezas has been appointed by Silversea as its new Senior Vice-President Global Sales, reporting directly to President Bert Hernandez.

Cabezas will oversee trade and consumer sales, all call centres and e-commerce business.

Next-gen favour touring

YOUNGER travellers are seeing the appeal in traditional guided coach touring as a niche holiday style, according to new market research commissioned by the Globus family of brands.

The study of 5,000 leisure travellers conducted by MMGY Travel Intelligence found three-quarters of Gen X and 'Younger Boomer' travellers see guided touring as an ideal way to travel.

The poll found 54% of respondents highly rank experiencing new cultures and the exclusive access some guided tours offer as an authentic look at local stories and traditions.

Six in 10 surveyed travellers identified key factors that would tip the scale in favour of a guided tour as opposed to independent travel, such as a balance of free time and included activities.

Half cited the ability to access areas off-limits to regular travellers as another motivating



factor, along with not having to worry about organising logistics.

Small-group touring was voted as the most attractive touring style, with 55% of respondents seeing the appeal for better access to local experts and a more relaxed style of travelling.

"We believe freedom and ease should always travel together," said Globus Managing Director Asia Pacific, Chris Hall.

Globus recently unveiled its new Small Group Discovery Tours, which are capped at 15 travellers for European itineraries and 18 elsewhere, with the 2026 range featuring 61 tours worldwide. *ML*

Meet the 'whycation'

TRAVELLERS will be driven by emotion, a desire to rest, and the need to make meaningful connections more than ever before in 2026, a new report by Hilton has claimed.

The rise of a trend dubbed the 'whycation' will see travellers steer away from wanting to pack more into trips, and shift toward intentional experiences.

These include nostalgic road trips shaped by kids' imaginations and family traditions, building more personal passions into itineraries, and travel that prioritises calm and connection.

Another finding from Hilton's report showed that three-quarters of the 14,000 travellers surveyed will book with brands they trust, a signal that "comfort and consistency" will be essential drivers next year.

The continued rise in solo travel was supported as well, with 48% of travellers adding extra solo days to family trips.











Fab four choose Choice









TRAVELLERS Choice has welcomed four new members into its agent network, including two from Queensland, one from Victoria and one from WA.

New members include Moreton Bay-based CJ Travel Experts (**top left**), owned by Kiwi expat Carla Jordan, who relocated from Tauranga to help the business expand into new markets.

Originally from Brazil, Jordan said she is hoping her new Qld agency replicates the South American focus her New Zealand agency has become known for. For Stefania Towler from

Normality in Nepal

TOURISM in Nepal has returned to normal after a period of instability, with local operators thanking the travel community for its support in the interim.

"We are excited to welcome travellers to our new Nepal," said Community Homestay Network founder, Shiva Dhakal.

Nepal is now under the control of an interim government led by its first female Prime Minister, Sushila Karki, who has said she plans to involve representatives from Gen X in her new cabinet. Townsville-based JetSetter Travel (bottom left), joining Travellers Choice was about having the chance to work with a high-calibre stable of partners.

"The network includes some of the travel industry's most experienced agents, and the way they operate aligns with my own approach in terms of business practices and values," Towler said.

Across in Western Australia, Perth-based Byford Travel owner Jessica Jamieson (top right) said her customers are primarily leisure and she is committed to "bringing affordability back into quality family holidays".

Also new is Melbourne-based mobile agency Snowsea Cruises (bottom right), owned by Xueying (Snow) Yu and catering primarily to Chinese Australian travellers.

Less than a year old, the company thrives on the back of Yu's experience as a former frontline Flight Centre agent and onboard crew member with Princess Cruises.

The company now employs two agents in Melbourne, has a third based in Europe and markets its services largely through Chinese social networking and e-commerce portals. *ML*

PHIL HOFFMANN TRAVEL'S TOP ACHIEVERS CRUISE ALASKA IN STYLE WITH NORWEGIAN CRUISE LINE

Norwegian Cruise Line (NCL) was delighted to partner with Phil Hoffmann Travel to host its prestigious Annual Top Achievers Trip, celebrating milestones and achievements of its team members across the business. This year, the group set sail aboard Norwegian Bliss, accompanied by Angela



Middleton, NCL's Director of Sales AU/NZ, for an unforgettable journey through Alaska's spectacular wilderness.

Before embarking, the group soaked up the best of **Seattle** over 36 hours, from a foodie tour of Pike Place Market and a



visit to the Flight Museum, to a behind-the-scenes Boeing Factory tour and a night at a Major League baseball game.

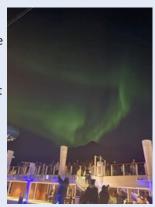
Once on board, the adventure continued with perfect Alaskan weather, a magical day cruising Glacier Bay, spotting orcas, witnessing spectacular glaciers, and even seeing the Aurora Borealis dancing across the night sky - what a highlight!

Guests dined their way through

NCL's signature and specialty restaurants, including Teppanyaki, Cagney's Steakhouse and Food Republic. Entertainment was hit - The Beatles Experience had everyone singing along, and *Jersey Boys* was such a crowd favourite that many came back for an encore. The adrenaline kept flowing on NCL's Speedway, and on

shore, the group discovered Alaska's rugged beauty through NCL's curated shore excursions, including the White Pass Railway, Goldbelt Tram, and Neets Bay Bear Viewing.

With ships purpose-built to connect guests with the great outdoors, NCL offers the ultimate way to explore Alaska. Choose from six ships and a range of seven to 16-day itineraries, including Cruisetours that combine the coast's wild beauty with land adventures through Denali National Park. For more, CLICK HERE.



page 5

TOP: Relaxing at sea in one of the numerous onboard venues on *Norwegian Bliss*.

MIDDLE: Ange and Peter Williams and the Phil Hoffmann Travel team enjoying Glacier Bay.

BOTTOM: The aurora borealis from the ship.

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TAT wants events

THE Thailand Convention and Exhibition Bureau (TCEB) has teamed up with the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) to offer both financial and non-financial incentives for meeting and incentive travel organisers from now until Jul 2026.

The 'Thailand Power Up' campaign aims to attract premium meeting and incentive groups to Thailand and create new opportunities to welcome high-quality international travellers.

To qualify for support under the campaign, events must host a minimum of 100 participants from long-haul markets or 200 participants from short-haul markets, with at least a four-night stay in Thailand.

100% NZ events

TOURISM New Zealand has officially launched the business events-specific iteration of its new 100% Pure New Zealand global brand campaign.

Launching across business events media and marketing channels this week, the campaign encourages business events decision-makers considering New Zealand to take their event out of its comfort zone.

The marketing push highlights the country's Maori culture, adventure-seeking thrills, natural beauty, and culinary scene.

Watch the video **HERE**.

EVENTS NEED GOVT RECOGNITION

THE events industry should be recognised as a core creative sector, argues a major new submission to the Senate Inquiry into the Australian Government's policy for the creative and cultural industries.

Prepared by long-time event producer and advocate Simon Thewlis, the report highlights why the event industry is a key creative industry, alongside advertising, design, live performance, architecture and video production.

Within the document, Thewlis advocates for a dedicated Creative Industries Policy, as well as an Arts Policy, to replace the current National Cultural Policy, which refers to the arts, the creative industries, and the cultural industries interchangeably - despite their fundamental differences.

"Conflating these terms makes



for a weak and incomplete policy," Thewlis said.

"It leaves out many of Australia's most important creative sectors - my industry, the event industry, being a prime example.

"While I cannot comment on whether the policy does a good job for the arts or the cultural industries, I can categorically say that it does very little...for the majority of Australia's creative industries," he added.

The nearly 50-page submission also calls for the creation of a new ANZSIC series so that businesses in the event industry are properly

included in the Australian Bureau of Statistics data, and become visible to governments.

Currently, events data is categorised under an obscure 'Other Administrative Services' code, lumping it together with other unrelated sectors.

"The pandemic showed just how little the event industry is understood in government," Thewlis pointed out.

"Despite being one of the largest creative industries, it received almost no targeted support, while arts, sport, and tourism sectors did.

"This was not deliberate neglect but a result of structural invisibility: events are absent from definitions, excluded from data, and overlooked in policy frameworks - the same mistakes cannot be repeated," he argued.

Download and read the full submission **HERE**. *JM*

North Shore home to new events venue

SYDNEY'S North Shore has welcomed a new business events venue with the opening of Newgreens Chatswood.

The lifestyle precinct blends dining, golf and wellness, and is ideal for hosting strategy sessions, conferences, and team celebrations.

Newgreens features a ballroom that can seat up to 160 and is configurable into three smaller rooms, as well as a boardroom with smart



technology and seating for 12. There is also a BBQ area for more relaxed occasions, and an intimate 26-seat theatre for product launches or private screenings, complete with food and beverage packages.

Events roadshow

THE Business of Events roadshow from JT Production Management is coming to Australia next month.

Event organisers looking for fresh ideas and inspiration can sign up for the lunchtime networking events, which take place in Melbourne on 20 Nov, Sydney on 27 Nov, and Brisbane on 09 Dec.

Tickets are \$39pp, including lunch - seats are limited, secure a spot **HERE**.





APPOINTMENTS

Send your new appointments to: appointments@traveldaily.com.au

Minor Hotels has welcomed Jason Kruse as Complex General Manager of Anantara Dhigu Maldives Resort, Anantara Veli Maldives Resort, and Naladhu Private Island Maldives. Kruse has over 20 years of experience, bringing expertise in luxury resort operations, pre-opening leadership, and turnaround strategy across the Asia-Pacific region.

Globus family of brands has brought on board travel marketing expert Johanna Raeder as Head of Marketing for its Asia-Pacific operations, who began her new role this week. Most recently, Raeder was Marketing Director at Voyages Indigenous Tourism Australia, and prior to that, worked at Norwegian Cruise Line Holdings and LATAM Airlines Group.

Sarah Beth Reno has been promoted to COO at Carnival Cruise Line, taking over from hotel veteran Peter Clarke. As part of her remit, Reno oversees guest-facing functions across the line's 29 ships. Reno joined CCL in 2014 as VP Entertainment, which was followed by a promotion to Vice President of Guest Operations, then Senior Vice President in 2022.

Singapore Tourism Board (STB) Oceania has appointed Dr Edward Koh as its new Executive Director, International Group & Oceania, who will begin his new role on o1 Nov. Koh joined STB in 2006 and most recently led the MICE division in the organisation. Prior to that, he steered the organisation's Greater China and Southeast Asia regional offices.

Auckland Airport has hired Murray Burt as its new Chief Infrastructure Officer, who was previously Director of Infrastructure and Place at Auckland Transport, Prior to that, Burt worked for the United Nations Refugee Agency, where he held senior global and regional leadership roles and led major infrastructure delivery programs across 60 countries.

Ritz-Carlton Yacht Collection has hired four new sales directors. Bonnie Newman is Regional Director, Trade Sales - West US and Western Canada; Kathy Lu is Regional Director, Trade Sales - Southeast, Midwest and Eastern Canada; Jessica Painter is Director, Charter and Incentive -Global Sales; and Melissa Ong is Director, Travel Partnerships - Asia.

Plaza Premium Group (PPG) has welcomed to the team Emrecan Ergin as Vice President, Middle East and Africa. In his new role, Ergin will be based in PPG's Regional Headquarter Office in Riyadh, leading the Group's strategic vision and operations throughout the region. He was previously Area General Manager within the business overseeing the Turkey and Hungary region.

SeaLink South East Queensland has partnered with Quandamooka Elder Matt Burns to share stories of North Stradbroke Island (Minjerribah) through its signature Indigenous experience, the Goompi Trail. Burns has been in the tourism industry for more than 30 years, bringing his personal connection to country into his work.



EK step for accessibility



EMIRATES has unveiled a suite of enhancements to its onboard services designed for travellers with accessibility requirements.

Prior to departure, travellers can now use a new Accessible and Inclusive Travel Hub via the carrier's website to help tailor their journey to their needs.

The portal can be customised to be viewed in a number of ways, optimised for mobility assistance, visual and hearing impairment, and hidden disabilities.

Different sections of the site focus on various elements of the journey, from before the flight to onboard, connecting in Dubai and arriving in Dubai.

There are also sections focusing on family travel, including flying with children, travelling while pregnant and unaccompanied minors as passengers.

Users can also book special assistance to help them through the airport depending on their specific needs.

Once onboard, the carrier has invested in new sensory products and fidget toys for children and adults to help with nerves and

other neurodivergent needs.

In business class, Emirates has introduced a new 'mattress hood' that allows the mattress to more securely fit the seat, similar to a fitted bedsheet.

The enhancement means travellers with mobility issues will no longer need to be disturbed or relocated mid-flight.

Emirates said insights from a diverse range of users and travellers with accessible needs were factored into the design.

MEANWHILE, Dubai Airports has joined forces with Australian Paralympian Jessica Smith as a strategic advisor to help make Dubai International the world's most accessible airport.

Alongside Emirati disability rights expert Fatma Al Jassim and Dubai-based advocacy foundation, Team AngelWolf, Smith will provide her personal expertise and experience to shape inclusive travel at DXB.

Smith represented Australia at the 2004 Paralympic Games in Athens and has since become one of the world's foremost voices on disability inclusion. ML

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