

Travel Daily

First with the news

Wednesday 15th October 2025

MTA HO SUZIE TEN BOHMER



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We are not seamless

AUSTRALIA is “falling behind the rest of the world” when it comes to having seamless border arrival protocols, Brisbane Airport CEO Gert-Jan de Graaff believes.

Speaking with the *Courier Mail*, the prominent airport executive called for a more streamlined process for returning Aussies and international visitors to ensure a better travel experience.

“Brisbane Airport is investing \$5 billion over the next five years... but all the concrete in the world will not be able to fix a process that remains out of our hands - border passage,” he warned.

Find your 100% NZ

NEW Zealand is 70% the journey and 30% the destination, as called out by Tourism New Zealand on **page nine** of today's issue of *Travel Daily*.

Scenic earlybird deal

A **SUPER** earlybird offer is available for Scenic Luxury Cruises & Tours' 2026 Europe all-inclusive, ultra-luxury cruising.

Full details on the offer are available on **page 10** of *TD*.

Trafalgar's class of its own

THE Travel Corporation's Trafalgar brand has revealed more details about the next phase of its river cruise growth strategy, confirming it will introduce a new class of vessel to the market in 2028.

Designed to reflect “Trafalgar's spirit” through exceptional experiences, connection, and meticulous attention to detail, the new hardware will join its fleet of former Uniworld vessels, initially flagged in Jun (*TD* 04 Jun).

To oversee the new ships' development and broader expansion strategy, Trafalgar has appointed veteran cruise operations executive Damien O'Connor (**pictured**) to the role of Vice President, River Cruise.

Part of his remit will be to craft a distinctive product position in the cluttered river cruise segment, anchored in immersive onboard and shore experiences.

O'Connor will also be tasked with “setting a new standard” in ship design, incorporating Trafalgar's signature warmth, storytelling, and high-quality guest experiences.



Trafalgar's new river chief added the brand's legacy and rich destination expertise will create a “game-changing opportunity for travel advisors”.

“Agents can look forward to a product that not only stands out in the market, but also builds repeat business and strengthens client loyalty,” O'Connor said.

His previous career credits include helping to lead the launch of the Solstice and Quantum classes for Royal Caribbean, and delivering *Silver Origin* and *Silver Moon* for luxury line Silversea. *AB*

Caption AU debut

CAPTION by Hyatt made its debut in Australia this week, with the opening of a new property located in Sydney.

Caption by Hyatt Central Sydney marks the hotel brand's expansion into the APAC region, following the recent opening of a hotel in Tokyo earlier this month - its second in Japan.

At the heart of the 174-key Sydney hotel is Talk Shop, a social hub blending a cafe, bar, co-working space and venue offering poetry nights and live music.

Today's issue of TD

TD has eight pages, a photo page from **TravelManagers**, and our **Luxury** page, plus full pages from:

- **Tourism New Zealand**
- **Scenic**

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13 NOVEMBER | SYDNEY
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Beyond Borders goes big

THE stage is set for the second Beyond Borders conference from ATIA, which will take place this Fri at The Star in Brisbane.

As well as the substantial program of senior executives presenting sessions during the day, the event will conclude with a heavyweight panel delivering their outlooks for the industry,

Carter not concerned

DESPITE speculation that its sole chartered ship may be purchased by a US-based cruise start-up, Terra Nova Expeditions CEO Greg Carter has assured the market its polar operations will not be affected.

Carter told *Travel Daily* that his company has a firm charter agreement in place for *St Helena*, adding that Positive Polar has also been linked with buying other vessels in the past.

Overseas reporting has suggested Positive Polar wants to ink a joint-venture agreement with an unnamed partner to buy *St Helena*, but it would need to raise capital by the end of this month to make it happen.



including Flight Centre Travel Group CEO Graham 'Skroo' Turner, Helloworld Travel Executive Director Cinzia Burnes, Collette Executive Vice President of Global Sales, Christian Leibl-Cote, and Group CEO and Managing Director Webjet Group Katrina Barry.

It will also be the first time that breakout sessions are included in the program.

"With so much change in technology, consumer behaviour and workforce dynamics, this year's program will help set the agenda for the next five years of Australian travel," Dean Long (pictured), CEO of ATIA said.

"I'm looking forward to the conversations, the connections and the energy that only this industry can deliver." *DF*



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Airlines face billions lost

THE airline industry is set to lose more than \$11 billion (A\$16 billion) in 2025 due to slow aircraft production, according to a new report from the International Air Transport Association (IATA) and consultancy Oliver Wyman.

The lagging supply chain is driven by four main factors, the report claimed, including costs associated with excess fuel, additional maintenance, increased engine leasing and surplus inventory holding.

Willie Walsh, IATA's Director General, pointed out that airlines depend on a reliable supply chain to operate and expand their fleets, but now, there are "unprecedented" wait times for aircraft, engines, parts and unpredictable delivery schedules.

Walsh made a number of suggestions that could turn production around.

"To start, opening the aftermarket would help by giving



airlines greater choice and access to parts and services," he said.

"In parallel, greater transparency on the state of the supply chain would give airlines the data they need to plan around blockages while helping OEMs to ease underlying bottlenecks," he added.

Other potential initiatives include expanding repair and parts capacity to accelerate repair approvals, leveraging predictive maintenance insights, pooling spare parts and creating shared maintenance data platforms to boost inventory. *JHM*

Pacific power in Oz

THE Solomon Islands and Tonga are hosting a joint Pacific roadshow in Nov, offering "the best of Melanesia and Polynesia".

Taking place in Auckland (17 Nov), Sydney (18 Nov), and Brisbane (19 Nov), agents will hear from tourism representatives and have a chance to win flights, thanks to Fiji Airways, Solomon Airlines and Qantas - [CLICK HERE](#) for details.

VA carry-on change

VIRGIN Australia has updated its luggage policy to limit economy passengers to just one bag weighing up to 8kg, along with a personal item such as a laptop or purse.

The current policy allows passengers two carry-on bags weighing up to a combined 7kg, along with a personal item.

The new rule, which is aimed at creating greater efficiency, will come into effect on 02 Feb.

The Flights Club

REWARD points travel partner, iFLYflat, has launched a premium membership program to help Aussie business owners turn their everyday expenses into points, and points into business class flights and travel experiences.

The iFLYflat Flights Club targets owners generating between \$1-10 million in annual turnover.

"A business with \$1 million in annual expenses is sitting on roughly \$40,000 worth of business class flights, they just need the right approach to unlock it," said The Flights Club co-founder, Steve Hui.

Platinum membership costs \$6,000 plus GST and includes up to four return business class reward seat bookings annually (using members' points), plus a tailored strategy, booking concierge, and closed-group luxury deals.

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Goldy up by 10%

GOLD Coast Airport has reported a record-breaking Sep, with more than 560,000 passengers passing through its terminal - 10% more than the same period last year.

"Qld and NSW school holidays, the King's Birthday long weekend, and three Grand Finals have all boosted travel," said COO Marion Charlton, adding that the momentum continued into Oct.

"Typically, during holiday periods we see a few peak days followed by quieter periods, but these holidays we had day after day consistently exceeding 20,000 passengers, which is incredibly strong," she added.

The airport's busiest day was on 03 Oct before the King's Birthday long weekend, which welcomed more than 23,000 travellers.

Aug delivers new record

THE number of Aussies taking international trips in Aug was the highest on record, according to new figures released by the ABS.

Just over 970,000 trips were made during the month, representing a 6% rise on Aug last year, with travel to Indonesia leading the way once again with a whopping 161,660 visits.

While almost all of the top 10 markets improved their position in Aug compared with the same period over the last two years, the same could not be said for the United States, which was the anomaly destination to lose ground on both years.

There were just 50,700 trips made to the States, a drop on the 56,330 recorded in Aug last year, and well off the 84,600 delivered before the pandemic in 2019.

On a month-on-month basis, the US also saw a significant decrease on the 70,570 trips made by Aussies in Jul.

The dismal numbers follow a



recent warning by the US Travel Association, which predicted a US\$1.2 billion hit to the US visitor economy due to the ongoing govt shutdown alone (**TD** 10 Oct).

An Oxford Economics report released this week also laid bare the impact of visitor declines this year, with states like New Hampshire, Vermont, North Dakota and Maine all on track to lose more than a fifth of visitors in 2025 compared to last year.

In May, research from the World Travel & Tourism Council also slammed the US for "putting up the closed sign" and impacting 2025 travel spend to the tune of 22.5% (**TD** 16 May). *AB*

Rumi gets roomier

ECO-LUXURY resort Rumi on Louth off the coast of Port Lincoln, SA has been given the green light to build 22 new ocean-view cabins, expanding from its current five suites and eight-bedroom residence.

The fully off-grid island retreat is also set to add a Japanese onsen-style day spa, tennis courts, hot tubs, a five-star Japanese restaurant, and an AI-powered hotel management system.

The news comes after months of discussions with authorities and environmental regulators, with the first few cabins to be ready by the end of the year, and the remainder slated for completion in early 2026.

"We're beyond thrilled to say that we'll be expanding Rumi with even more opportunities for guests to enjoy this special and unique place," shared founder Che Metcalfe.

"Since day one, we've prioritised sustainability in all facets of our operation, and this build will be no exception."

Ponant's new skipper

FRENCH cruise line Ponant will soon have a new leader, with Benoit-Etienne Domenget named as Group CEO from 03 Nov.

Domenget replaces Herve Gastinel, who announced his departure earlier this month to pursue new professional projects.

The Switzerland-based Domenget has extensive experience in the hotel segment, including leading development for the Accor brand in Europe.

Most recently, he was CEO of hospitality education company Sommet Education for close to nine years.

"Domenget's extensive and diversified experience and expertise in strategic fields will give him all the assets to make us an ever-stronger and more innovative player in the luxury and responsible cruise sector," said Francois-Henri Pinault, the founder of Ponant's parent company Artemis.

Jayride's new play

JAYRIDE has inked a strategic alliance with XoomPlay, part of AirAsia's media network, to bring digital advertising and entertainment screens across its fleet in Southeast Asia.

Travellers booking airport transfers with Jayride in Australia, Thailand and Malaysia will soon see curated video advertisements that promote tourist attractions, local destinations, and partner brands during their journey.

The tie-up aims to create new revenue streams for drivers and operators, while giving brands and tourism partners a fresh way to reach travellers.

Under the initial framework, Xoomplay is set to pay Jayride an upfront media buy of approximately US\$100,000 over the first six months.

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Agents shine at TravelManagers' gala awards dinner in Bali

TRAVELMANAGERS' annual national conference held in Bali last month concluded with its glittering gala awards dinner. After three action-packed days, during which time attendees took part in several plenary sessions, workshops and a community event, the scene was set for a big celebration.

Hundreds of personal travel managers (PTMs) were joined by National Partnership Office (NPO) team members, suppliers and media partners to honour the previous year's accomplishments at the Bali International Convention Centre in Nusa Dua.



MOST Improved PTMs by state, joined by NPO's Noree Kahika (left) and Jodie Beck (right).



NEW PTM of the Year by state, joined by NPO's Linda McMullen (left) and Nicole Henderson (right).

GLAMOROUS attendees loved dancing and dining the night away at Westin Resort Nusa Dua.



TRAVELMANAGERS' Top 10 PTM sellers, joined by NPO's Michael Gazal (left), Tanyu Cilek and Grant Campbell (right).



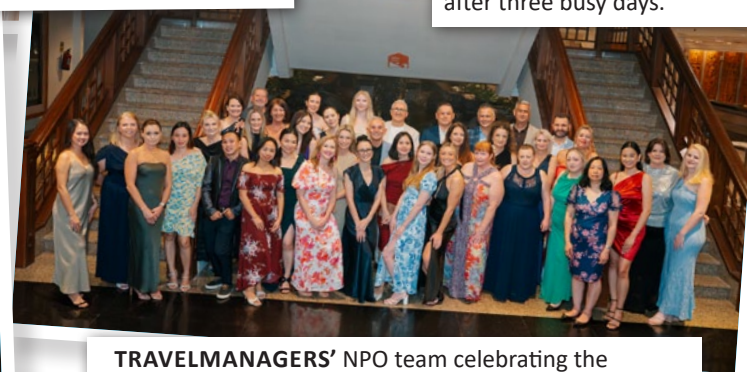
BARRY Mayo Spirit Award winner: Carli Byrne.



PTM of the year: Emma Lucas (Vic).



GUESTS enjoyed the glittering gala awards dinner after three busy days.



TRAVELMANAGERS' NPO team celebrating the conclusion of another incredibly successful conference.

Blame it on the butler

SINGAPORE'S Raffles Hotel Sentosa island has launched an initiative for guests to maximise its famous butlers.

'The Butler Did It' experience is an exclusive package that reimagines the art of personalised service.

From a private limousine arrival at the resort to the moment guests step into their villa, they will be looked after by their dedicated Raffles butler, who takes care of every detail.

Designed as a four-day, three-night escape, mornings begin with a breakfast for two and continue with a private Rolls-Royce tour of Sentosa, guided by a Raffles butler who will share hidden gems and local stories to get guests acquainted.

Other options include a Raffles Sentosa Sling tasting session led by an expert mixologist, and a fragrance-making workshop where guests craft bespoke scents that capture the essence of their stay.

Guests also have access to a wellbeing butler, a specialist who works closely with the resort's wellness team to design holistic, personalised wellbeing programs.

The experience is priced from \$5,845 per villa per night for a Garden One-Bedroom Pool Villa.

Australia finds the Michelin Key to success

THIRTY-FIVE Australian hotels have been awarded Michelin Keys - the equivalent of Michelin Stars for restaurants - in the second year of the awards and the first that included Australia.

Of the 35, one hotel gained three Michelin Keys, while nine took out two and a further 25 were awarded a single Key.

Lizard Island Resort (**pictured**) in Queensland was Australia's star (or key) performer, joining 143 other hotels around the world to be awarded three Michelin Keys.

The awards noted that Lizard Island Resort's "villas and suites are tucked into the landscape with bleached timbers, soft linens, and open-plan layouts that pull the outside in", with no locks, schedules or need to keep track of time.

Of the two Michelin Key



establishments, Victoria, NSW, Qld and SA all walked away with two each, while Tasmania and the NT each picked up one as well.

Two more islands featured, with Capella Lodge on Lord Howe Island and Southern Ocean Lodge on Kangaroo Island awarded, while the famous Saffire Freycinet in Tasmania was also named a two-Key hotel.

NSW featured heavily in the

one-Key group, with 12 hotels included, while Tasmania over-indexed with four, more than any other state or territory other than NSW and Victoria.

Hobart's Henry Jones Art Hotel, The Islington Hotel, The Tasman Hotel (which **Travel Daily** just stayed in), and MACq 01 Hotel all made it onto the list.

For more on Michelin Key hotels, **CLICK HERE**. *DF*

APT goes ultra-lux on the Norwegian Fjords

LUXURY travel specialist APT has revealed its Europe 2027 Preview brochure with a particular highlight being what it calls an "ultra-luxurious" 11-day Norwegian Fjords itinerary.

Sailing from Amsterdam to Copenhagen, guests will have the opportunity to hike to Pulpit Rock, ride the world-famous Flam Railway, explore Oslo and Copenhagen, and more.

The voyage itself will take place on *Seabourn Venture*, which features all-veranda



oceanfront suites and carries just 264 guests on board.

For those that want more time on the Fjords, a 24-day 'Magnificent Europe and Norwegian Fjords' itinerary is also available.

CLICK HERE for more details.

VeriJet very troubled

PRIVATE jet company VeriJet, based in the US, has filed for chapter 7 bankruptcy, according to a variety of media outlets.

Chapter 7 is an official move to liquidate assets to enable the business to pay off outstanding debts.

It comes after the sudden death of founder and CEO Richard Kane, who suffered a heart attack last month.

Court records have the business US\$38m in debt.

NEXT ISSUE: Southeast Asia special report

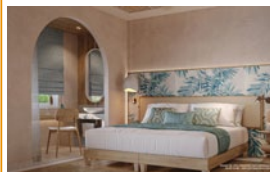
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Club Med has marked its 75th anniversary with major renovations to its flagship resort, **Club Med Punta Cana**. The North America property now boasts brand-new social spaces, fresh culinary experiences, and newly renovated accommodations.

Guests can dine at the transformed Joia Bar, a poolside spot ideal for daytime lounging or evening socialising, as well as the El Mundo Food Club - a re-imagined main dining concept that fuses global flavours.



Sydney has welcomed its latest property - **25hours Hotel The Olympia**, located on Oxford Street. Situated within the heritage-listed site of the former West Olympia Theatre, the hotel features 109 guest rooms designed to reflect the building's cinematic

past. At the heart of the property are four culinary destinations - London restaurant The Palomar, cinematic bar The Mulwray, London-inspired cafe Jacob The Angel, and rooftop bar Monica.



Alma Resort in Southern Vietnam has launched Alma Discovery Camp, a new recreation and educational facility designed to connect children with nature, farm animals and sustainable agriculture.

The farm offers hands-on learning via guided tours, with children able to pet and feed animals such as cows, goats, chickens, ducks, and rabbits. There is also a dedicated museum with interactive exhibits on agricultural products.



Wellington's Atura Hotel is set to officially become the **Wellington Quarter (WQ) Hotel** tomorrow, marking the property's transformation under Capstone Hotel Management. Located in the Thorndon district, the hotel features 108 rooms with

city skyline views and comforts such as modern TVs, workspaces and high-speed wi-fi. Guests can dine at Frankie's Bar + Eatery.



Hale O Ka La, a private luxury villa set on Hawaii's Big Island, has just completed an US\$8 million renovation. Set on a cliff within the Mauna Kea Resort on the Kohala Coast, the holiday home offers five bedrooms, six bathrooms and a saltwater pool. The property's grounds have been redesigned, along with the addition of a waterfall grotto with Jacuzzi, shaded lounging areas, and a swim-up bar.

Hannah St, a culinary hive



UPCOMING Melbourne property, Hannah St Hotel, will be home to five venues from The Mulberry Group when it opens this summer.

The venue collection includes Hannah St Coffee, a hole-in-the-wall cafe offering locally-made brew and pastries, and Coupette Corner Bistro & Bar, serving breakfast, lunch, and dinner along with drinks.

The Mulberry Group is also bringing Terrace Lounge to Hannah St Hotel - a rooftop multipurpose event space with views of Southbank; Bar Hannah, serving as a neighbourhood hub; and The Carriage Lounge, an elegant and intimate venue.

"Hannah St Hotel offers more than just a place to stay - it's an experience that will deliver the best of Melbourne's cultural identity in one exciting destination," said the hotel's General Manager, Peter Minatsis.

"From our locally inspired interiors by Flack Studio to the curated art, food, and design collaborations, every detail is curated to reflect the city's

creative spirit."

Pictured: Mulberry Group Founder, Nathan Toleman, with Time & Place Creative Director Edward Pearse and Minatsis. *JM*

Etihaad to Ethiopia

ETIHAD Airways has launched a new daily service to Ethiopian capital Addis Ababa, marking the official start of Etihaad's joint venture with Ethiopian Airlines (**TD** 12 Jun).

Through the tie-up, Etihaad guests can now reach more than 55 destinations across 33 African countries via Ethiopian's hub in Addis Ababa, while Ethiopian Airlines customers gain access through Abu Dhabi to over 20 destinations across Asia, Australia and the Middle East.

Further expanding its offering in East Africa, Etihaad Airways will return to Zanzibar in Jun 2026 with seasonal summer flights.





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