Travel Daily First with the news

Thursday 30th October 2025



Kelsian asset interest

KELSIAN confirmed it has received "solid interest" from buyers in its quest to divest its tourism portfolio (TD 02 Apr).

In an update to the ASX this morning, the company said that while it can't reveal the parties interested or the timings of the sale, when it gets the green light it will unlock significant shareholder value.

Journey Beyond and NRMA's tourism division are rumoured to be frontrunners (TD 01 Sep).



Expedia rewards in Oz

EXPEDIA Travel Agent Affiliate Program (TAAP) has launched its rewards program to Australia and New Zealand for the first time, offering advisors additional benefits beyond commission.

Agents can now earn reward points on eligible bookings and redeem them for gift cards from a range of global retailers under the new scheme, with more details on who the retail partners are to be revealed soon.

Before launching locally this week, TAAP's reward scheme was piloted in a handful of overseas markets, the results of which showed a high take-up rate.

Since launching in the United Sates in 2022, the scheme has

RSSC appreciates you

REGENT Seven Seas Cruises (RSSC) is hosting its fifth annual **Travel Advisor Appreciation** Month in Nov.

The initiative, now in its fifth year, will see the luxury line offer two free webinars to equip agents with advanced selling tools and strategic insights.

Heather Porter, host of the podcast The Hustle Rebellion, will present 'Boosting your travel business with AI tools' on 14 Nov and 'Posting with purpose - how to tell stories that inspire travel' on 26 Nov, both at 12pm AEST. Register for the sessions HERE.

Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today features eight pages of news, including our Business Events News page, plus full pages from:

- Inspiring Vacations
- Turkish Airlines



enjoyed strong traction with 59% of active Expedia TAAP agents enrolled, while in Canada the engagement was even higher, with 66% of agents participating.

"These results highlight the program's success in recognising agent contributions and delivering rewards that truly resonate," Expedia said.

"As demand for always-on travel support continues to surge, **Expedia TAAP Rewards offers** timely recognition for the agents who deliver personalised and seamless travel experiences." Learn more about TAAP's

rewards program HERE. AB

Hertz parks in Asia

HERTZ has announced a new franchise partner in Singapore, appointing Reach Group's Ace Drive as the official Hertz and Thrifty franchisee from 01 Nov.

Reinforcing the company's expansion strategy across APAC, the new Singapore operations will offer short-term self-drive rentals, long-term leasing options, and premium chauffeur services for business and leisure travellers.

Hertz Asia-Pacific VP Damien Shaw said the partnership "ensures travellers experience the same high standards of reliability and service consistency across the region".

Inspiring savings

INSPIRING Tours' Black Friday sale starts tomorrow, with special deals on trips to South America. Japan, the Stans and more - see more information on page nine.

\$100 with Turkish

TURKISH Airlines is giving agents the opportunity to earn up to \$100 on every business class ticket and \$50 on economy class for flights ex-MEL to Europe.

More details on page 10.





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Caution on AI marketing

A NEW study conducted by **Expedia Group Advertising** suggests travel brands should be cautious about how they integrate AI into their long-term marketing strategies.

The report found that 41% of travellers prefer Al-created marketing content to be combined with human input, with only 16% stating they don't mind raw Al advertising, so long as it's deemed "useful".

Fully AI-generated influencers and landscape videos elicited negative commentary from respondents, with viewers expressing "unease, skepticism,

Investigation will reveal more details

THE daughter of a woman who died on Lizard Island while on a land tour with Coral Expeditions is hopeful that a coronial investigation will shed more light on how the death occurred.

Speaking with The Australian, Suzanne Rees' daughter Katherine said she was "shocked and saddened" to learn that Coral Adventurer had departed Lizard Island after an organised excursion without her mum.

"From the little we have been told, it seems that there was a failure of care and common sense," Ms Rees said.

According to reporting, police believe Suzanne Rees was not reported missing until five hours after the vessel left the island.



and annoyance".

Travellers are most excited about the use of AI in smarter deals and budgeting tools (24%), as well as personalised trip planning (19%).

Not surprisingly, Millennials are the most comfortable with all uses of AI in travel content, followed by Gen Z.

"With so much noise in the industry about AI, privacy, and personalisation, we wanted to understand how travellers truly feel about AI and its potential uses in the travel booking journey," said Rob Torres, Senior VP, Expedia Group Advertising.

"The results show the huge opportunities available to marketers in combining AI with human input when creating content, giving the industry a new playbook for earning trust and driving bookings." AB

ANA switches NDC

SABRE and All Nippon Airways have signed a deal to launch NDC content through the tech company's SabreMosaic Travel Marketplace, becoming the first Japanese carrier to activate NDC.

"This achievement represents both Sabre & ANA's commitment to creating new value for the travel industry by innovating how air travel is retailed," Sabre said.



La Vie takes over

LA VIE Hotels & Resorts is now managing Mercure Townsville, following its success at Madison Plaza in May.

Mercure will continue to operate under Accor's franchise agreement, while La Vie will work with Accor to maintain brand standards and roll out various operational strategies.

Mercure will also benefit from the ALL Accor loyalty program was recently refreshed.

Intrepid for families

INTREPID Travel has launched 10 new family adventures for 2026, with itineraries in Greece, Slovenia, Turkey, India, Botswana, Kenya, Tanzania and Ecuador.

Whether spotting seals, giant tortoises and pink iguanas in Ecuador and the Galapagos, or stargazing from an overnight safari camp in the Serengeti, families will connect, learn about different cultures and create lasting memories together.

The new adventures bring Intrepid's family range to 50 trips worldwide - one of the industry's most extensive family offerings.

Erica Kritikides, Intrepid's General Manager of Experiences, said that family travel is one of the largest and fastest-growing segments in the industry.

"With over 50 dedicated tours and one of the most generous children's pricing policies in the industry, we're making it easier than ever for all types of families to explore the world together."

Outrigger deals soon

OUTRIGGER Resorts & Hotels will launch its Cyber Sale on 10 Nov, offering up to 45% off bestavailable rates at its beachfront resorts across Hawaii. Fiii. Thailand and the Maldives.

Vacation condos at Waikiki. Maui & Kauai are also discounted.











Scoot GM on rising demand for SEA

SOUTHEAST Asia remains a favourite holiday destination for Australians and demand will only increase in the future, according to Scoot General Manager, Adam Kelly (**pictured**).

"Over the next three to five years, we anticipate sustained and significant growth in demand for Southeast Asian destinations, particularly from Australian travellers who are increasingly seeking value, flexibility, and more meaningful travel experiences," Kelly told **TD**.

The aviation executive pointed to IATA's recent data revealing that the Asia-Pacific region is projected to be the fastest-growing globally, with a 9% year-on-year increase in revenue passenger kilometres in 2025.

Looking further ahead, passenger numbers in the region are expected to double by 2043.

The low-cost carrier has responded to this demand in



recent months by expanding its network across the region, announcing new routes to multiple destinations in Indonesia Labuan Bajo, Medan, Palembang, and Semarang, which will launch progressively from Dec 2025 through to Feb 2026.

It follows Scoot's other new routes to ports like Da Nang and Nha Trang in Vietnam, Kota Bharu in Malaysia and Chiang Rai.

"Each of these destinations represent the growing interest from leisure travellers looking for new and exciting regional experiences beyond the usual hotspots," Kelly explained. "By offering Australians more ways to explore Southeast Asia and beyond, we are not just meeting demand, we are helping redefine how people experience travel in the region."

TravelManagers agent Amber Victory has also noticed a rising interest in Southeast Asia from her clients, a destination that she described as "having my heart".

"It's not just one type of holiday - it's not just backpackers or Bali resorts," she told *Travel Daily*.

"You can do wellness, hiking, gastronomy, high-end luxury, kids' clubs, adrenaline, slow travel... whatever you love, there's a version of it waiting there.

"The key is conversation - when you really understand what lights up a client (food, wildlife, wellness, shopping, culture, adventure), you can steer them toward the right path."

To view *TD*'s special report on Southeast Asia, click **HERE**.





LANGKAWI

Today's issue of *TD* is coming to you from Langkawi, where we have called in on our fiveday Princess voyage.

WE'VE just pulled into Langkawi, our latest port of call, surrounded by sandy beaches, tropical jungles, dramatic cliffs and waterfalls.

Passengers can choose from a number of shore excursions, including a mangrove cruise tour, kayaking through the Kilim Geopark, checking out the Underwater World aquarium or catching a cable car up to Langkawi's highest peak, overlooking rainforest.

Tonight, *Discovery Princess* will set sail for our next port of call, Penang.







SPECIAL REPORT

Discover the magic of slow travel

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Mayfair to Kimpton

IHG Hotels & Resorts has taken over the management of the heritage-listed Mayfair Hotel in Adelaide, with the property to be rebranded to Kimpton Mayfair Adelaide from next year.

The 170-room property will continue to operate as the Mayfair Hotel under IHG management from mid-Dec, before undergoing an extensive refurbishment program.

IHG has undertaken the project in partnership with Ark Capital, which is 50% owned by ASX-listed Regal Partners.

"The Mayfair Hotel will be transformed and elevated by the Kimpton brand to offer a boutique luxury lifestyle experience that celebrates Adelaide's creativity, warmth and sophistication," said Matt Tripolone, MD Australasia and Pacific, IHG Hotels & Resorts.

The Kimpton brand debuted in Australia in 2022 via the Kimpton Margot Sydney.

Spencer grows by ten

SPENCER Travel's independent contractor model has recently expanded with 10 new travel professionals joining the business in the past two months.

"We're thrilled to welcome such a talented group of professionals to the Spencer Travel network," said Penny Spencer, MD of Spencer Travel Holdings.

"It's incredibly rewarding to see experienced consultants recognising the value in aligning with the Spencer Travel brand - where independence and entrepreneurial spirit are celebrated, but the support, systems and community of a larger business remain."

The model is part of the company's broader Spencer Travel Affiliates division, made up of agents looking to be supported by an established business that offers freedom and flexibility.

It also offers agents access to preferred partnerships, advanced



booking technology and marketing support.

According to Spencer, the model empowers agents to build their own businesses, while having the opportunity to leverage off the brand's trusted reputation and benefit from its Virtuoso membership and decades of industry experience.

"The strong momentum we're seeing is a testament to the culture we've built - one that's collaborative, values-driven, and focused on shared success," Spencer (pictured) said of the growth of the business. JHM

Luxe Sydney hotel

CONSTRUCTION has begun on a new \$275 million luxury hotel development in Sydney that will be operated by EVT Hotels & Resorts' Independent Collection.

First flagged two years ago, the 228-room Florin Hotel is on track to open in 2027 at former site of the Australian headquarters for Universal Pictures on Kent Street.

The marquee feature of the hotel is a 'vertigo suite' on the 18th floor, which will be equipped with a transparent glass floor.

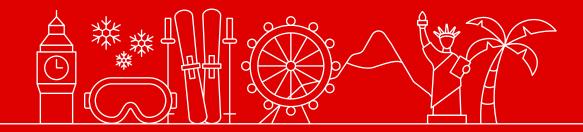
There will also be a rooftop infinity pool complete with a two-level rooftop bar.



International

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'Sale ends 11:59pm (AEDT) 5 November 2025 unless sold out prior. Select routes, travel dates and terms and conditions apply.



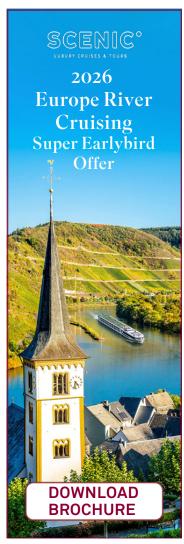




QF slashes 300,000

QANTAS has discounted 300.000 seats to 27 destinations on the airline's international network as part of a new super sale, including popular routes such as Bali, Japan and LA.

The promo applies to travel between Nov 25 and Sep 2026.



Parton tunes new venture



RESERVATIONS are now open for a Dolly Parton-themed hotel in Nashville, as well as an accompanying Dolly's Life of Many Colors Museum.

Both the SongTeller Hotel and museum dedicated to the iron butterfly of country music are opening in Jun next year, all housed under the one roof for the convenience of mega fans.

Designers of the hotel hail the property as embodying Parton's iconic charm and songwriting spirit, which are woven into all 245 rooms and suites.

Two live music venues are also on offer for hotel guests - Parton's Live and Jolene's - that will feature performances from some of Nashville's most prominent and up-and-coming artists.

Meanwhile, the Dolly's Life of Many Colors Museum will be the largest exhibition dedicated to Parton to date.

Spanning the entire third floor

of the hotel, the attraction aims to take visitors on a journey through the star's life, from her rise to fame, or as Parton herself has often described it, "from the top of the mountains to the top of the world".

Guests will also gain unprecedented insight into her decades-spanning career across music, film, television, and philanthropy, as well as the personal values of family and faith that are key to her life.

"Broadway has become such a hub of tourism: this felt like the right time to bring something special to all the wonderful activity in Nashville," Parton said.

"I have always dreamed of being able to create something here in Music City and I know we've found the perfect addition to the city I call home," she added.

Watch Parton talk about her latest tourism and hotel venture by **CLICKING HERE**. AB

Walshe's ANA rep

LISA Manera has been appointed by the The Walshe Group as Sales and Marketing Manager - Western Australia for All Nippon Airways.

The newly created role is based in Perth, a city ANA will serve daily between 01 Dec-Apr 2026.







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Magnifica refurb

THE major refurbishment of MSC Cruises' *MSC Magnifica* began in Malta this week, as one of two Musica-class ships set to be enhanced by the brand.

Magnifica will have the MSC Yacht Club installed, which will add 63 suites to the vessel.

A number of *Magnifica's* other venues will also be enhanced, while two new speciality dining venues - Butcher's Cut and Kaito Sushi Bar - will be added.

MSC Poesia is also scheduled to enter dry dock in Feb, and be completed in time for her MSC Yacht Club debut in Alaska in May.

Four Seasons Saudi

NEW Four Seasons Private Residences are coming to Shura Island on Saudi Arabia's Red Sea coast, in partnership with real estate developer Red Sea Global.

The 75 new Four Seasons residences will be comprised of 43 dune villas and 32 waterside villas, and will be located between the Four Seasons Resort and Shura Links golf course.

Four Seasons's three- to fivebedroom Private Residences will feature floor plans ranging from 414m² to 534m², private infinity pools, and expansive terraces for al fresco living.

Residents will enjoy access to the neighbouring Clubhouse at Shura Links, which will be operated by Four Seasons, acting as a social hub for homeowners with a state-of-the-art fitness facility, a pool, and a restaurant.

K-Pop travel hunters



THE global pulling power of the South Korean-inspired animated musical fantasy *K-Pop Demon Hunters* has led 25% of Aussie parents to confirm their kids are now agitating for a holiday to the Asian destination.

New data from PassportCard Australia and the Korea Tourism Organization also showed that 35% of Aussies are now planning, or considering a trip to South Korea, because of the film's impact and commercial success.

Testament to that impact has been a 23% year-on-year jump in visitation across the board since the release of *K-Pop Demon Hunters*, with 1.36 million travellers making their way to Seoul in Jul 2025 alone.

Children are becoming an increasingly vocal advocate for South Korean culture, the study confirmed, with six in 10 kids now singing or dancing to K-Pop at home, while around one in three

are talking more about Korean food and society.

In more interesting insights, nearly two in three Aussies said "the explosion of Korean pop culture", such as K-Pop, K-Beauty and K-Drama, had primed them to be more likely to book a trip to South Korea.

Travel brands and advisors may need to tune into the growing appetite for S Korean music as well, with 20% of Aussies stating music influences their travel decisions - a number that spikes to 58% among the 18-34 group.

"We are seeing a clear generational shift where online content drives offline travel," said Peter Klemt, Chief Executive Officer of PassportCard Australia.

"For many younger travellers, inspiration comes from culture first and Korea's global influence, whether it's via videos on TikTok, or K-Pop and movies, the K-wave is setting the pace," he added. AB



Window Seat

AIR New Zealand has always prided itself on its service and quality of onboard produce, so perhaps it is not surprising the carrier has broken new ground by launching the first fly-through coffee shop.

No, this can't be done at 30,000 feet for obvious safety reasons, but recently passengers and crew were supplied some fresh Carry On coffee on the tarmac at Queenstown Airport.

The Kiwi airline teamed up with local roasters Coffee Supreme to deliver the cup of hot beans directly through the window of the A320 jet (pictured), with customers on flight NZ0600 from Queenstown to Wellington today taking home coffee that literally has their name on it.

"It's a privilege to back a local business that shares our passion for quality, care and innovation, and together we're proudly pouring a taste of home for our customers around the globe," Air NZ said.





businesseventsnews.com.au

ICC is cheering

ICC Sydney is celebrating a successful year, having delivered \$746 million in economic contribution through delegate spending during FY25 - a nearly 4% increase year-on-year.

The venue's newly released annual performance review also shows that it welcomed 1.5 million attendees across 546 core events, up from 1.2 million attendees in FY24.

Additionally, ICC Sydney generated 1.3 million hotel room nights in FY25 - an increase from 1.2 million in the previous financial year.

The world-class venue also invested in future event success by delivering 10,499 hours of professional development for its team and nurturing 13 graduates.

Newy nabs events

UTILITA Arena Newcastle has reported a surge in interest from corporate event planners in recent months, driven by its focused investment in refreshed spaces and premium hospitality.

The venue has attracted a growing roster of high-profile events, including the Solicitors' Gala Dinner coming up in Nov.

The Arena has highlighted its recently refurbished smaller spaces, including the exclusive artist Green Room, now ideal for boardroomstyle meetings, VIP events and networking receptions.

CAPELLA LEVELS UP LUXE EVENTS

ONE of Sydney's most iconic heritage buildings has been transformed into a luxury events precinct, with The Lands by Capella set to open in Feb 2026.

Adjacent to Capella Sydney and located within the heritage-listed Department of Lands building, the new events destination has been designed to host occasions of every scale, from black-tie galas and product launches to conferences and exhibitions.

The collection of five venues will feature soaring ceilings, rich architectural detail, and flexible configurations, boasting advanced audiovisual capabilities and customisable staging.

The Capella Ballroom offers a 536m² space with the ability to host up to 400 guests cocktailstyle, creating an ideal setting for large-scale celebrations.

For more intimate occasions



like private dinners and boutique brand launches, the Liberty Ballroom offers understated elegance for up to 250 guests.

The Lands by Capella's smaller, interconnected suites - The Botanist, The Surveyors, and The Explorers - complete the venue offering, ideal for pre-event functions, board meetings and creative breakouts.

Every event is supported by Capella Sydney's hospitality, with personalised planning led by the

in-house team of specialists and menus crafted by Executive Chef Gabriele Taddeucci.

"There is nothing else like this in Australia - a collection of event spaces that balance heritage and luxury with such care and refinement," said Marc von Arnim, GM at Capella Sydney.

Melissa Brown, CEO of Australian Business Events Association, commented: "It's exciting to see new venues open with such thoughtfulness in the heart of the city.

"There is always a need for more and different styles of venues to suit the broad range and scope of business events.

"It is wonderful to see historic buildings renewed and adapted to enhance the quality of meetings and event experiences."

The Lands by Capella is now accepting bookings. JM

Winarch appoints two events experts

WINARCH Group has appointed Blake Vanderwoude (pictured) as Head of Winarch Live, charged with leading the investment company's expanding venue portfolio.

Most recently the Event Acquisition Manager at Venues NSW, Vanderwoude brings more than 15 years' experience across Australia's sports, events, and entertainment industries.

Adam Slattery also joins Winarch Group in the role of



Head of Winarch Music.

A former senior executive at Vodafone, Woolworths and American Express, Slattery will lead Winarch's growing music retail division, which includes The Guitar Lounge in Sydney.

Events can add it

SYDNEY Showground has launched a new and free event carbon calculator as part of its Climate Conscious Events program and partnership with net zero consultancy Clima.

The easy-to-use tool generates a high-level carbon footprint of clients' events in under 10 minutes, using only essential client data and providing quick insights planners can access it HERE.



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APPOINTMENTS

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Pullman Sydney Hyde Park has welcomed a new Director of Sales, **Toby Paul**, who brings across previous hospitality experience with Accor, Marriott and IHG. His career has seen him focus on rebranding and repositioning hotels, as well as achieving record-breaking revenue results through team collaboration and data-driven strategies.

Paperbark Camp has appointed Bryce Mason as its new Head Chef, who will elevate the property's culinary fare. Mason brings a wealth of experience and a unique, contemporary approach to the property's kitchen, joining after a distinguished tenure as Head Chef at Bangalay Dining at Shoalhaven Heads.

German shipbuilding company Meyer Werft has appointed Melanie Freytag and Jorg Heidelberg to the management board, joining Bernd Eikens and Ralf Schmitz. Freytag will become CFO in Nov, taking over this responsibility from Schmitz, who will focus entirely on his role as Chief Restructuring Officer. Meanwhile, Heidelberg will join as COO, bringing 21 years of experience across various roles with the company.

American Airlines is set to welcome Nat Pieper as Chief Commercial Officer - a position that the carrier had left vacant for over a year - beginning o3 Nov. Currently the CEO of the oneworld alliance, Pieper will oversee the airline's commercial strategy, alliances and partnerships, cargo, co-branded credit cards, loyalty, revenue management, network planning and more.

Christine Tan has been made Area Managing Director for Southeast Asia at Preferred Travel Group, effective immediately. Based in Singapore, Tan will look after account management and business development across the region, driving growth and brand visibility for Preferred's global portfolio of over 600 independent luxury hotels and experiences across 80 countries. Tan brings more than 30 years' experience across the global hospitality and technology sectors, most recently serving as Vice President of Sales - APAC for Lighthouse, a SaaS enterprise platform serving more than 75,000 hotels worldwide.

Sofitel Sydney Wentworth has announced the appointment of Mark Burns to General Manager. Burns has led several high-profile hotel transformations throughout his long career in senior leadership roles with renowned hotel brands, including Fullerton, Starwood, Mandarin Oriental, and The Dorchester. In his new role, Burns will guide the evolution of Sofitel Sydney Wentworth's luxury programs, guest experience design, and partnerships that align with the brand's identity as the 'Hotel of the Arts'.

Dan Hayes has been hired by the Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority as its new Chief Operating Officer. Commencing o3 Nov, Hayes is charged with leading operations at the LA Convention Center.



Moreton Bay sets record



MORETON Bay has set a new record for international tourism growth, with guests spending more than 2.3 million nights in the region - 22.7% above the region's previous record - according to Tourism Research Australia data.

This makes Moreton Bay one of Queensland's fastest growing tourism regions, and follows strong investment in the area driven by an increase in holidaymakers, as well as students, visiting family and friends, and the announcement of three five-star hotel developments in recent months.

Tourism & Events Moreton Bay CEO Luke Edwards considers the region "one of the state's most exciting growth stories", adding its proximity to Brisbane, wide variety of experiences and local hospitality are all "driving strong tourism results".

"We continue to work closely with local businesses and tourism operators to mature their offering and strengthen distribution to cater to both key domestic and key international markets," Edwards explained.

"The positive feedback we're receiving from global travel partners, and the results reflected in this data, confirm Moreton Bay's visitor appeal is growing rapidly and is now on the world stage," he added. JHM

Pictured: Edwards with Suzy Bohan, General Manager of Tourism & Events Moreton Bay.

LAX closes up T5

LOS Angeles International has begun the phased closure and demolition of its terminal 5, to make way for a new facility. which will open ahead of the 2028 Olympic Games as part of a US\$30b improvement program.

Airlines based in terminal 5 are relocating in phases, with JetBlue already shifting to terminal 1 on 21 Oct, with Spirit Airlines moving to terminal 2 on 22 Oct, and American Airlines relocating to terminal 4 on 28 Oct.

LAX has also opened a new satellite concourse - an extension of the west gates at its international terminal - which adds eight new gates, as well as almost 14.000m².



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