

Win a Trafalgar cruise

RUNNING from 12 Sep to 30 Oct, a new incentive from TTC Tour Brands and Singapore Airlines is giving agents the chance of scoring a Trafalgar cruise in Europe aboard *Verity*. Advisors will earn points for bookings across TTC brands and Singapore Airlines - details [HERE](#).

JB closes in on Voyages

AFTER close to a year of speculation, it has been confirmed that Journey Beyond is now the most likely suitor to purchase Voyages Indigenous Tourism Australia, the operator of Ayers Rock Resort and the Mossman Gorge Cultural Centre (**TD** breaking news).

The Indigenous Land and Sea Corporation (ILSC) confirmed to **Travel Daily** that it has entered "exclusive discussions" with the experiential tourism company, leaving rival bidder Airport Development Group as a remote prospect of making the purchase.

The ILSC stressed that discussions are ongoing and that at this stage, there is no final binding agreement for an acquisition deal, and no further comment will be given until a meaningful update has been agreed to.

If the sale goes ahead, the land at Yulara and Mossman Gorge will be transferred to the appropriate representative group for each of the Traditional Owners, the primary motivation for making the divestment.

Gilbert+Tobin and Greenhill was enlisted to explore sale options in early 2024, with media reports swirling later that year that Journey Beyond was one of the



major candidates to make a play for Voyages (**TD** 13 Nov 2024).

At the time, Journey Beyond said it was not able to comment, however Airport Development Group did confirm its interest, stating it relished the chance to look after an Australian icon. **AB**

Adventure delayed

UNEXPECTED issues in the construction process will delay *Disney Adventure's* launch date from 15 Dec 2025 to 10 Mar 2026 - impacting 24 sailings.

In a communication to guests and advisors, Disney Cruise Line (DCL) said that passengers booked on *Adventure's* maiden voyage can sail on the revised maiden voyage date at a 50% discount of the original fare.

Travel advisors do not need to take any action to make this happen, as DCL will shift these bookings automatically.

For clients who are unable to make the new 10 Mar date, DCL is asking agents to advise the line by 21 Sep to request a refund, with a 50% future cruise discount to be issued.

All other bookings will be automatically refunded by DCL and a 50% discount credit issued, which must be booked by 31 Mar 2026 and depart on or before 31 Mar 2027.

WA in cruise control

BROOME has opened its new floating wharf today, with CLIA Australasia MD Joel Katz stating it will "unlock the Kimberley region's cruise potential".

The new facility means international ships can now arrive directly without needing to stop in Darwin or Fremantle.

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A truer Jordan trip

TRUTRAVELS has added Jordan as a destination with a new eight-day itinerary.

This will be TruTravels' first venture into the Middle East, visiting Amman, Wadi Rum, and Petra, with highlights including a swim in the Dead Sea, a desert glamping experience, and discovering the Siq Gorge.

The 'Jordan - Uncovered' itinerary is on sale from \$1,795 per person, with departures beginning from Mar.

Beware of 'luxe-washing'

EXCLUSIVE

IT IS getting increasingly difficult for agents and consumers to determine which travel brands offer a truly luxury experience, according to APT Travel Group Chief Executive Officer David Cox.

Speaking with *Travel Daily* this week, Cox said the scourge of what he labelled "luxe-washing" is becoming more commonplace, and was one of the key reasons APT decided to embark on a



rebranding and positioning earlier this year (*TD* 27 May).

"We needed to raise ourselves above the luxury pack," Cox said.

"Many companies are claiming to be five-star when they simply are not - in essence they are 'luxe-washing,'" he concluded.

The APT chief said he was especially concerned with the mass market appropriation of the term 'luxury', as APT embarks on a bold vision to reshape the high-end river cruise space on European waterways with its fleet of new purpose-built vessels.

"By any measure APT leads the true luxury Europe rivership field, and there is no luxe-washing in APT land," Cox declared.

When asked what differentiates APT from those brands he believes are masquerading as luxury, Cox pointed to criteria that advisors should look for when making decisions on behalf of clients for river sailings.

"Our new European riverships are leading the way in true luxury; they have a passenger to crew ratio of 2.5 to 1, customers do not have to open their wallet for the duration of their cruise, and we have industry-first seven dining options," Cox explained.

On shore, APT also offers "industry-leading" inclusions, such as VIP visits to castles hosted by royal family members. **AB**

Alaska violations

THE Southeast Alaska Conservation Council has released data showing hundreds of cruise ship discharge violations in the destination during the 2023 and 2024 seasons.

More than 17 ships committed around 700 violations during the two-year period.

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when experience matters



NT musters bigger effort

EXCLUSIVE

THE energy in the room from advisors and suppliers was palpable last night, as NT Tourism hosted its third Muster event for this week for the trade - this time at the Hilton Sydney.

This year the Top End's tourism body decided to revamp the format of its Muster events along Australia's east coast, trimming some of the celebratory elements in exchange for maximising the time and number of meet-and-greets on offer between travel agents and Top End suppliers.

Part of that change has seen NT Tourism combine its inbound tour operator event pitching at international agents with the domestic Muster, holding them both on the same day.

Speaking with *Travel Daily* yesterday, NT Tourism Director of Domestic Marketing Operations, Monika Tonkin (**pictured**), said the changes were made after



listening to feedback.

"[Travelling to the Muster events] is a big investment for our NT businesses, and the fact that they can now do it together as a team is important, because for the NT, we are better when we are together," Tonkin said.

"This is the opportunity where we can come in as a pack and meet with the trade to give them all of the new product updates and what has changed.

"It really is a huge week for the NT operators because some of them are doing six-hour days of non-stop appointments and events, but everybody is just really excited to make the most of the opportunity to be here." AB

Hrdlicka earns \$50m

FORMER Virgin Australia CEO Jayne Hrdlicka earned a salary of \$28.47 million for 2025, a massive jump on the \$2.75 million earned by the high-flying exec last year.

Hrdlicka's annual pay cheque was revealed in Virgin Australia's annual report released this morning, and combined with shares, saw the former chief walk away with over \$50 million.

The former CEO received cash payments of around \$20 million, \$18.4 million of which were the result of short-term incentives, while her 10.244 million shares - granted as part of an equity plan in 2021 - are now worth around \$33 million.

During her four-plus years in charge, Hrdlicka steered VA out of voluntary administration.

Meanwhile, new VA CEO Dave Emerson will take home \$2.48 million in 2025, CFO Race Strauss will pocket \$4.82 million, and Velocity Frequent Flyer CEO Nick Rohrlach will earn \$4.41 million.

A comfier QF ride

QANTAS Airways' first Airbus A321XLR is set to take to the skies, with bookings open today.

The two new aircraft, named 'Great Ocean Road' and 'Outback Way', mark a major milestone in Qantas' fleet renewal program, offering a more comfortable flying experience for customers.

Qantas said the new planes will take to the skies with commercial passengers for the first time on 25 Sep from Sydney-Melbourne and Sydney-Perth, subject to regulatory approval.

They will offer wider seats, larger windows, fast & free wi-fi, and overhead bins that allow for around 60% more bags than the Boeing 737s they are replacing.

The extended flight range will also see the aircraft operate both domestically and internationally.

Qantas Domestic Chief Executive Officer Markus Svensson said the airline's customers will be the first in the Asia Pacific to experience the next-generation A321XLR.

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QANTAS | **American**

*Sale ends 11.59pm (AEST) 15 September 2025 unless sold out prior. Select routes, travel dates and terms and conditions apply.



Wyndham takes off

HOTEL loyalty program Wyndham Rewards and Singapore Airlines' KrisFlyer are now partnering to offer the hotelier's 120 million members more value.

Wyndham Rewards members can now choose to earn KrisFlyer miles on select hotel stays in lieu of Wyndham Rewards points, or convert existing points into KrisFlyer miles, starting from 6,000 points for 1,200 miles.

Miles can go towards flights, cabin upgrades and more.

"Today's travellers want more than points - they want a global rewards currency that gives them the freedom to travel where, when and how they choose," said Eyvonne Lin, VP, Marketing and Commercial Performance, APAC, Wyndham Hotels & Resorts.

Windstar adds one

WINDSTAR Cruises' newly refreshed sailing yacht *Wind Star* will be sailing to Tahiti all year-round from Mar 2027.

She joins all-suite *Star Breeze*, which also cruises through the French Polynesia region throughout the year, making Windstar the cruise line with the most departures in Tahiti, said a statement from the company.

Also new in 2027 will be 'early goodbye' disembarkation, as ships will arrive in Papeete at 8pm the day prior to departure, maximising time on the island.

Private floating lounges will also feature at the yacht's marina platform, creating a relaxed, resort-like atmosphere.

Take care in PNG

SMARTTRAVELLER is warning travellers in Papua New Guinea to exercise a high degree of caution next week, as the country gears up to host large events for its 50th Anniversary of Independence on 16 Sep, and public holidays on 15 & 17 Sep.

"Stay alert for possible violence, unrest and crime," it advised.

China finally finds form

VISITOR numbers from China have nearly doubled in one month, according to the latest *Overseas Arrivals and Departures* report from the ABS.

Having remained largely stagnant for some time following the reopening of Australia's borders post-pandemic, data for Jul showed the China market nearly reclaimed its once-held top spot as a source market.

The figures showed 112,900 visitors from China arrived in Australia through Jul, whereas only 60,200 were recorded in Jun.

Numbers have hovered around this lower level in the months prior, with May seeing 67,350 visitors and Apr recording 73,770.

China nearly eclipsed New Zealand as Australia's top source



market, with the Kiwis barely holding onto the lead with 122,910 crossing the Tasman and making up 17% of all arrivals.

Overall, a total of 743,210 trips to Australia by foreign passport holders were recorded, up 12.8% compared to Jul last year, but still 6% down on pre-pandemic numbers from Jul 2019.

The UK was a distant third, with only 56,460 Brits making the trek.

In terms of target destinations, Qld was again ahead of Vic in second place, welcoming 192,900 in Jul compared to 178,600 for Vic.

The Sunshine State also proved the key drawcard for New Zealanders, with the state welcoming 53,380 Kiwis compared to NSW with 34,290 and 24,390 opting for Victoria.

According to the data, most states and territories continue to surpass, or are close to, their pre-pandemic arrival numbers, however Vic continues to lag.

The state is nearly 12% down on its 2019 numbers, making it the poorest performing state.

Shadow Tourism Minister Sam Groth slammed the result, lambasting the Vic Government for slashing Visit Victoria's annual budget by as much as 81%. *ML*

SQ and AS cut ties

SINGAPORE Airlines has confirmed its codeshare agreement with Alaskan Airlines will be terminated from 01 Oct.

In a communication with travel advisors, the airline said codeshare sales for AS departures beyond 30 Sep 2025 are closed, and that agents should closely monitor disruption notifications through the channels where bookings have been made.

The latest development follows Alaska Airlines recently announcing that it will significantly scale back its partnership with Singapore Airlines, impacting all loyalty agreement redemptions.

Vanuatu VIP lane

MY VANUATU has launched a VIP Airport Priority Lane, following a similar concept in Fiji.

The benefit is the result of a partnership between My Vanuatu, the Vanuatu Tourism Office, and Bauerfield International Airport.

It is included in every holiday package for exclusive use by My Vanuatu customers.



Window Seat

HAVEN'T you ever taken that first lick of an ice cream on a hot afternoon and thought 'I could do this for a living'?

Okay, maybe that's a bit unorthodox but Air New Zealand clearly has, as it is giving three Kiwis undoubtedly the sweetest job this summer.

A nationwide search has now been launched for three 'Chief Ice Cream Tasters' who will be tasked with helping Air NZ choose its next onboard flavour to serve to travellers.

The job sounds rigorous, with the three successful applicants to be flown to Nelson to visit Appleby Farms, which said it maintains an old-fashioned approach to churning ice cream.

There are no age limits for the job, with essential requirements listed as being an ability to conquer brain freeze and prior experience in "dessert demolition".

Tasters must also have "exceptional cone-concentration skills", a lifelong love affair with ice cream and the ability to stay chilled under pressure.

Based on taster feedback, the selected flavour will be available on board Air NZ flights from Dec.

CLICK HERE to apply for this really cool gig.

AATKings

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NEW ZEALAND with AAT Kings Product & Contracting Manager (NZ), Ange Mount

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CORPORATE UPDATE

It's a Deel on biz visas

AI-POWERED payroll and HR platform Deel has launched a new immigration service specialising in visas for short-term international business travellers.

The new Business Visas service allows companies to track visa applications in real-time, which can be reviewed by visa experts.

With business travel expected to return to pre-pandemic levels by next year, the service aims to simplify the issue of



frequent short-term trips made by corporate travellers outside of long-term relocation, particularly as it relates to compliance issues such as tax and administration.

Business Visas allows companies to manage staff mobility through visa eligibility checks, application submission and documentation.

The platform also allows travellers to manage their own travel requirements, bypassing HR and legal complications and minimising lack of visibility, delays and missed deadlines.

Deel Head of Product Pearce Dolan said the new service allows businesses to make compliance simple and seamless. *ML*

CT Partners unique

RECORD registrations have been noted by CT Partners as the independent agent network prepares for its 2025 conference in Singapore next month.

The company says 110 delegates are set to attend, with the number including 36 preferred suppliers and 62 members.

CT Partners said the first half of 2025 was highly successful, with a group-wide \$2.2 billion in TTV recorded and ticketed airline volumes up 10%.

The conference theme of 'Resilience and Reinvention' will include an address by ATIA Chief Dean Long and a keynote by decorated SAS commander and executive Ben Pronk.



CWT purchase closed

CLIENTS and employees of Carlson Wagonlit Travel (CWT) will be integrated into American Express Global Business Travel following the completion of its acquisition (*TD* 01 Aug).

Amex GBT CEO Paul Abbott said the acquisition will generate greater investment capacity for its software and services, as well as create significant shareholder value through efficiency gains.

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Pursers says HLO Noosa



FELICITY Dascombe's Pursers Travel Group has expanded again, adding and opening its 14th Helloworld Travel branded agency in Noosa.

What began as a single location in the Queensland town of Murgon, Pursers Travel Group has grown to become one of Helloworld's most successful multi-store owners, with agencies across southern Queensland and into northern NSW.

"Pursers Travel Group is proud to be taking on the Helloworld Travel Noosa store, continuing a long-standing presence in the community," Dascombe said.

"We're especially pleased that the previous owner, who has operated the business for over 13 years, will remain connected in an external capacity, and we warmly welcome her ongoing support."

Dascombe added that expanding into Noosa was a natural step that complements its existing store network and its growing bus and coach operations.

Helloworld General Manager

Network Development, Adrian Boccia, said Dascombe is a shining example of what is possible within the Helloworld network.

Pursers' new Helloworld Noosa outlet is **pictured** above. *ML*

Mandarin Vienna

MANDARIN Oriental will open its first hotel in the Austrian capital of Vienna next month, with guests welcome from 20 Oct.

The new property is located within a 1908-built Art Nouveau building on the Riemergasse and features 86 rooms and 52 suites (**pictured**) meticulously restored with original design elements.

Public facilities will include four restaurants, a cafe and bar along with seven meeting rooms and a 140m² ballroom.



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Jetstar has launched a Northern Territory sale, with one-way fares available from \$120. The offer coincides with Tourism NT's new national marketing campaign, 'Best Kept Season', which encourages Aussies to discover the Top End and the Red Centre from Sep to Apr. The discounted flights are available until 11.59pm AEST 15 Sep, unless sold out - discover more information [HERE](#).

Travel agents can enjoy extra savings on **Hurtigruten** Group Voyages. The cruise line is offering advisors an additional 5% per person off the cruise portion of their package by upgrading a standard group booking. Choose from Hurtigruten's Original or Signature voyages, including best-selling itineraries showcasing Norway and the High Arctic. Call 1300 151 527 for more information.

Perisher is encouraging adventurers to lock in the lowest available prices on its Epic Australia Pass before 15 Oct. The unlimited-access option for adults is available for \$1,045, while the four-day adult option can be purchased for \$589. The snow holiday destination is also offering a payment plan, with travellers able to secure their pass for only \$49 upfront - find out more [HERE](#).


Celebrity Cruises is giving travellers the chance to enjoy up to 75% off a second guest, plus savings of up to \$800 across all 2026 sailings. The earlybird promotion includes the seven-night 'Greece, Malta & Turkey' itinerary onboard the line's brand-new ship, *Celebrity Xcel*. The offer ends on 06 Oct - visit [celebritycruises.com](#).

Australians can secure discounted fares to over 100 destinations across Europe, Asia, South Africa and America for travel in 2026, thanks to **Singapore Airlines'** latest sale. Additionally, travellers can enjoy 50% bonus KrisFlyer miles to selected European destinations, a series of Pelago value-adds, and more - see the fare sheets [HERE](#).

TFE Hotels has launched a global sale, offering 20% discounts on best available rates across 100 hotels in 11 countries, including Adina Hotels, A by Adina, Quincy Hotel, Vibe Hotels, Travelodge Hotels and Rendezvous in Australia, New Zealand and Europe, as well as The Savoy Hotel, Hotel Kurrajong and selected properties in the Far East Hotels' network in Asia. The promotion ends 30 Sep - more details [HERE](#).

Clients can enjoy an additional 10% off the full fare price on top of current market offers, with **Riverside Luxury Cruises'** latest sale. The promotion applies to the brand's festive and Christmas 2025 cruises, and is available to book until 30 Sep 2025. Visit [riverside-cruises.com](#) for more information.




Elite Havens has unveiled special seasonal offers at Arnalaya Beach House, Bali. Holidaymakers can save up to 30% on bookings in Oct and Nov, 10% off in Dec, and 30% off in Jan - learn more [HERE](#).



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TM chops for charity



TRAVELMANAGERS'

Georgia Thomas, who is part of the Sydney-based National Partnership Office team, will undergo a transformation to raise funds for charity.

The Operations Executive, who has grown her hair past her waist over the past four years, will take to the stage at TravelManagers' annual National Conference in Bali next week for a charity chop.

Thomas will lop off more than 60 centimetres of her hair for Variety Foundation's 'Heart with Heart' initiative, which supports children who have lost their hair due to medical conditions.

She is aiming to have raised at least \$5,000 in sponsorship before the chop takes place.

"TravelManagers has supported me by sharing my fundraiser with our network of personal travel managers (PTMs) and our partner suppliers," Thomas said.

"I am also scheduled to speak at the conference, and I'm looking forward to sharing my journey with the people who have been

so generous in their support."

Thomas' colleagues also took part in a 'crazy hair day' event, complete with coloured hairspray and props, with the person with the craziest 'do (Marketing Manager Tania Myles) winning the rights to wield the scissors in Bali.

Thomas will continue her hair transformation next month, with plans to colour her remaining hair light pink for Breast Cancer Awareness Month. *JM*

Airbus China boost

AIRBUS China is aiming to double its A320 family production capacity in Tianjin to better support Chinese airlines as well as international markets, the company said in a statement to *Global Times*.

The planemaker will establish a second A320 family final assembly line in the northern China city which, once complete, will mean Airbus will have 10 single-aisle aircraft final assembly lines worldwide.