

VA neighbour-free

VIRGIN Australia has started rolling out the option of bidding for neighbour-free seating on selected domestic and short-haul international flights.

The seats with extra adjacent space costs \$30, and successful bids are confirmed at least two hours prior to departure.

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VA "mirrors" JQ pricing

VIRGIN Australia adopts a "selective pricing response to Jetstar" for travellers booking 28-60 days in advance, new research from the University of South Australia has claimed.

The study showed that while VA was matching JQ's pricing in that booking period, it was not as competitive when it came to bookings 21-days or less prior to departure, instead aligning more with Qantas' pricing.

Findings showed that VA was running a "hybrid carrier model" as a "strategic necessity".

"This reflects VA's strategy to compete for price-sensitive early

bookers by simplifying some services while still leveraging its full-service offerings - such as frequent flyer programs and business class options - for less price-sensitive travellers closer to departure," UniSA researcher Professor Shane Zhang said.

"Virgin Australia is walking a fine line between cost and service differentiation.

"It follows Jetstar just enough to remain competitive with budget-conscious travellers, but not so much that it dilutes the brand with higher-yield business customers," he added.

Zhang also suggested that Qantas may need to reinforce its premium positioning as it faces a declining domestic market share with VA pushing hard.

According to the latest ACCC competition report, as of Jun 2025, Qantas had the biggest market share domestically on 37.8%, having increased it from Apr, while VA serviced 33.1% and Jetstar had 27.4%. *DF*

Act quick for Nevada

THERE is only one week left for agents to enter a comp to win a fam to Nevada with Travel Agent Finder (TAF) and Travel Nevada.

To enter, TAF agents need to complete the Nevada Trailblazer Specialist Program by 30 Sep and submit a short entry form.

The trip will be hosted by TAF founder Anna Shannon.

Complete the program **HERE** and the entry form **HERE**.

Check out all of LA

THE new Pan Am Hotel by Hilton, part of the Tapestry Collection, is set to open at Los Angeles' Citadel Outlets next year.

That is one of the many highlights on offer to travellers resulting from developments taking place in LA - for the full list of updates, see **page 10**.



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QF eyes NZ with MH

QANTAS Airways is planning to launch a new codeshare agreement with its partner Malaysia Airlines on routes to New Zealand.

The codeshare arrangement would provide Malaysia with the ability to connect through Australia to New Zealand on a number of Qantas services.

This would include Sydney to AKL, WLG, CHC, and ZQN, Brisbane to WLG and CHC, and Melbourne to CHC and AKL.

Chile removes visa fees

TRIPS to Chile for Australians are now easier and cheaper, with new rules coming into place this week no longer requiring travellers to obtain a visa.

Under the changes to make travel more seamless to the South American nation, the \$180 fee has been waived and passports are now stamped for free upon arrival.

Visa fees paid before the change took effect on 22 Sep remain unchanged, as the update does not apply retrospectively.

Adventure World's Latin America Product Manager, Ana Salazar, welcomed the development, stating it opens the door for more Australians to truly experience Chile.

"With the Atacama Desert, Patagonia's wild beauty, world-class wines, and generous culture, Chile has so much to offer.

"Easier entry means more



Australians can embrace it - and Chile's communities stand to benefit from the connections and stories that will follow."

Some of the top attractions viewed by Aussie travellers each year include the Torres del Paine National Park in Chile's Patagonia region, the Chilean Lake District featuring volcanoes and forests, as well as the bohemian seaside city of Valparaiso.

From May 2020 until early this month, Australians had been required to obtain an e-visa before arriving in Chile. **AB**

Celeb river opens

CELEBRITY River Cruises is opening the remaining inventory on its debut 2027 sailings.

This follows unprecedented demand for priority booking access earlier this month, with the allocation exhausted in just six minutes (**TD** 15 Sep).

The general public will now have their chance to score a place on one of *Celebrity Compass* or *Celebrity Seeker*'s 33 seven-night Rhine or Danube sailings.

Highlights of Celebrity's river vessels will include open decks, a top-deck bar and grill, and 'Magic Edge' cantilevered dining pods.

President Laura Hodges Bethge said the response to Celebrity River Cruises' design and experience has been "overwhelmingly positive".

Travel budgeted for

AUSTRALIANS are reprioritising their spending to fund travel plans despite the cost of living remaining high, a new study compiled by iSelect has claimed.

As part of their spring finance cleaning, around a third of Aussies said they would "review" their travel and leisure spending, with 34% stating they would likely pursue local getaways or day trips instead of pricier holidays.

Domestic trips will also be favoured over overseas trips.

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The Nordic Alliance

HURTIGRUTEN is seeking to lift the profile of its brand and Norway as a destination in Australia and NZ via a newly established travel agency alliance, a report by *Latte* has revealed.

The founding members of the Nordic Alliance will enjoy several perks, including co-op marketing funds, training, earlybird offers, regular support services, priority famil invitations, as well as access to some of Hurtigruten's global executive team and partners.

Founding members include Home Travel Company's Robyn Sinfield, Bicton & Claremont Travel's Carole Smethurst, & Phil Hoffmann's Michelle Ashcroft.

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Chimu awarded B-Corp

POLAR and Latin America specialist cruise and tour brand Chimu Adventures has secured certification as a B-Corp operator.

The company said it was awarded an initial certification score of 92.2 based on its standards of environmental and social impact, as well as transparency and accountability.

Chimu Adventures Managing Director and Co-founder Chad Carey (**pictured**) said the company has always strived to be a responsible operator.

"This means a lot, not only to our employees but also to our entire social and environmental ecosystem," Carey said.

"We are very proud to wear the B Corp badge as it truly reflects the Chimu culture, not only from where it has been but where it is going as we strive to improve.

Carey added the certification process allowed Chimu to take a hard look at every aspect of the



business and refine accordingly.

Carey is encouraging other tourism businesses not to be daunted by the "rigorous" process to become certified, stating that it offers a hands-on look at how every angle of the business operates.

"After listening to our employees, we improved our volunteering and fundraising efforts and rewrote basic operational policies to make them more appropriate to today's operating climate.

"We also created more transparencies across the business for our employees, improved communication strategies, and bolstered parental leave opportunities," Carey added. *ML*

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Last supper for a free look at Apostles?

TOURISTS hoping to take in the view of Twelve Apostles along The Great Ocean Road in Victoria may soon be slugged a visitor charge for the privilege.

A tourism tax to see the attraction was put forward by the Great Ocean Road Regional Tourism (GORRT), which is calling on the Victorian Govt to charge a viewing fee as part of a "once-in-a-generation" opportunity to support surrounding conservation and infrastructure.

"This approach must allow the active management of visitation across the day and year, encourage overnight stays, capture economic benefit, and reinvest directly into protecting and enhancing the fragile coastal environment," GORRT claimed.

While the proposal is calling for a "tiered fee system", a specific cost structure is yet to be outlined, however it would help fund \$126m in preservation.

Puerto Rico opening

RESERVATIONS are now live at Four Seasons Resort and Residences Puerto Rico, for arrivals beginning 20 Nov.

The newly refurbished resort, nestled along a three-kilometre stretch of beach, features 139 rooms and 10 dining options offering a range of cuisines.

Active travellers can choose from a myriad of recreational pursuits on land and sea, including an inflatable water park, a golf course, and tennis and pickleball lessons.

SYD's spring surge

THE spring holidays are sparking a record international passenger surge at Sydney Airport, which is forecasting 2.7 million transits over the three-week Sep peak.

That number would be more than 100,000 over the prior corresponding period.

This would include 1.62 million domestic passengers and 1.08 million international travellers.

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Biggest Cruise Month ever

CRUISE Lines International Association (CLIA) is preparing for its biggest-ever Cruise Month program with more than 30 individual webinars focusing on the event's four weekly themes: ocean cruising (05-11 Oct), river cruising (12-18 Oct), expedition cruising (19-25 Oct) and luxury cruising (26 Oct-01 Nov).

Designed to inspire and inform travel agents, each webinar will be presented by a different cruise line offering information on their latest initiatives, from new ships and itineraries to sales tips and product knowledge.

The information sessions will be available from Tue to Thu every week at different times: 10am, 12pm and 2pm AEST.

"Cruise Month is an opportunity to build excitement around cruising and the summer sailing season, so our webinar program is designed to give travel agents the insight they need to engage



their clients and inspire them to select their next cruise," enthused Joel Katz, CLIA Managing Director in Australasia.

"This year's webinar program offers insights into dozens of different cruise lines spanning the full spectrum of the global cruise sector, making it a great opportunity to gain knowledge and inspiration."

CLIA's Cruise Month Toolkit includes the webinar schedule in addition to a video guide offering a short, practical walkthrough of the month - all accessible via the CLIA Members Hub - click **HERE** for further details. *JHM*

TA grows in Adelaide

TRAVEL Associates has opened a new boutique outlet in a luxury-focused extension of Adelaide's Burnside Village shopping centre.

Celebrating with advisors and its VIP clients this week (**pictured**), the new store is the second in the growing portfolio of local business leader Krystal Savage, who said it was very exciting to welcome her clients to the new-look boutique.

"Every detail of this flagship has been considered with our clients in mind," Savage said.

"It's a place to pause, plan and dream about what's next, whether that's a bespoke safari, a private villa in Europe, or a once-in-a-lifetime cruise," she added.



Searching by style

THE Council of Australian Tour Operators (CATO) has launched a new search function within its CATO Touring Academy to help travel agents match their clients with a tour business based on their desired travel style.

CATO Managing Director Brett Jardine said the feature gives agents a time-saving way to connect their clients with the right product.

The function allows agents to more easily source a tour and itinerary better suited to families, luxury-seekers or those wanting to develop their own niche experience from the CATO base.

"It highlights the breadth and expertise of our members across the land supply sector, ensuring travellers receive high-quality, trusted touring experiences."

Within the Touring Academy, agents will find a range of land-supply resources including professional learning and product knowledge modules.



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Window Seat

THE compelling new Netflix documentary about the life and career of controversial actor Charlie Sheen has been a hit with viewers, but we surmise not nervous flyers.

AKA *Charlie Sheen* starts with an anecdote about Sheen's addiction to alcohol, which included many flights where the *Two and a Half Men* star practically tethered himself to the first class bar.

However, during the peak of his career aboard a flight on a French airline, Sheen said that while heavily inebriated, a flight attendant approached him with an offer to meet the pilot, as he was a "big fan".

While in the cockpit, the pilots both took selfies with Sheen, but things escalated when the star asked to sit in the captain's chair - which the pilots alarmingly obliged.

Sheen then asked what it was like to fly the pax jet, at which point the skipper flicked off the auto pilot and said "you're now flying the plane".

Everyone survived the flight, so I guess that's 'winning'?



Food a major motivator

MORE than eight in 10 Australians have admitted to taking a holiday to a particular destination purely to visit a specific restaurant or food spot.

On the back of new research by Booking.com, the OTA has coined the term "nom-tourism" to attach to the findings, which looked at how food is now a major motivator influencing how and where Australians go on holiday.

Findings in Booking.com's 'Taste of Home Asia Pacific Report' found 88% will visit a local food market while on holiday - a figure which rises to 96% among those who stay in holiday homes.

An overwhelming 97% say their cooking habits change on holiday, with holiday home guests suggesting they enjoy experimenting and trying new recipes or hosting dinner parties for family/friends.

Dining out at local restaurants is also a favourite activity, with 62% saying they regularly source a local eatery while on holiday.

The new food trends come from a survey of 8,000 travellers across the Asia Pacific region, and are designed to reveal how food influences travel decisions.

Results also showed another new term in 'Trolley Tourism', which relates to travellers visiting food festivals and trendy supermarkets as part of their trip.

The study found many travellers are bringing parts of their kitchen with them, packing favourite spices and appliances to create



a "portable pantry" in order to maintain a sense of comfort.

Another eight in 10 respondents say they pack food and cooking items, including tea and coffee (38%), sauces (24%), coffee machines and BBQ tools (13%).

"Travellers embrace holiday homes not just for comfort, but to explore local flavours, experiment with cooking, and connect over meals," said Booking.com MD for Asia Pacific, Laura Houldsworth.

"Culinary experiences are becoming a key factor in travel decisions, transforming holiday homes into dynamic spaces for discovery and connection." ML

Poesia refurbishment

MSC Cruises has revealed that two speciality restaurants and a sports bar will be among the improvements added aboard *MSC Poesia*, in one of the largest upgrades ever undertaken in the luxury cruise line's history.

Butcher's Cut and Kaito Sushi Bar will be added ahead of 2026, as well as the All-Stars Sports Bar, a refreshed Aurea Spa and gym powered by Technogym.

The all-inclusive cruising concept, the MSC Yacht Club, will also be offered to *Poesia* guests as the ship sails MSC's debut season in Alaska.

Jakarta taxes drop

HOTEL owners and operators in Jakarta are hailing a move by the city's provincial government to temporarily slash city taxes for the hospitality sector to make visitation more affordable.

In response to lackluster visitor demand, the city has granted hotels a 50% tax reduction to the end of this month, with the rate to reduce to 20% for the remainder of the year.

Restaurateurs will receive the same tax cut for the same period, with a review subsequently scheduled to determine whether it will be extended into 2026.

A321XLRs take off

QANTAS has marked its first two A321XLRs taking off this morning on flights, with the new jets servicing flights between Sydney and Melbourne and Sydney and Perth.

Qantas is the first airline in APAC to fly the new aircraft, which offer wider seats, larger windows, faster wi-fi, and higher ceilings.

The Rose Collection

HOTEL representation company Fiona Rose Representation has rebranded and relaunched as The Rose Collection.

The company handles promotion in Australia and New Zealand of The Doyle Collection, Paristory Hotels and a range of other family-owned hotels in Europe.

Several additions to the portfolio are expected to be announced in the coming weeks.

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Preferring it in the air

PREFERRED Hotels & Resorts has launched its first private jet itinerary, which visits several of its properties in seven destinations over 17 nights.

'Legendary Journeys - The Ultimate Private Jet Experience by Preferred Hotels & Resorts' will start in Singapore and stop in India, Rwanda, Kenya, Greece, Morocco, and London.

Taking place from 06-23 Oct 2026, the luxury experience is available for up to 29 couples, while single occupancy is available upon request.

The itinerary for the trip includes premier hotels and VIP excursions and special events in each destination, with travellers to enjoy lie-flat leather seating on a custom, private VIP aircraft, as well as gourmet meals prepared by a private chef, accompanied by curated wines and spirits.

Other bonuses include transfers, private VIP airport access, luggage concierge, personalised gifts and amenities, and a dedicated 17-member service team, including a professional photographer and videographer to capture exciting moments throughout the trip.

"Our mission has always been to connect travellers with the world's most remarkable independent hotels and destinations in ways that are both unforgettable and transformative," said Lindsey Ueberroth, CEO of Preferred.

The launch comes off the back



of Preferred's *Luxury Travel Report 2025*, which revealed that 61% of affluent travellers see once-in-a-lifetime moments as the ultimate luxury, and 75% seek experiences

Adelaide improves

ADELAIDE has been recognised as the 'most improved destination' in the Global Destination Sustainability Index's (GDS-Index) top 40 ranking for 2025.

The SA capital achieved the greatest improvement overall, skyrocketing 23 places in the ranking in its second year of participation, fuelled by the city's Integrated Climate Strategy 2030 and the launch of its first sustainability roadmap.

According to GDS-Index, Adelaide demonstrated "exceptional environmental leadership" and "landmark progress in its supply chain", particularly with Adelaide Airport becoming the first in Australia to achieve carbon neutrality for its direct emissions.

Meanwhile, Melbourne was number one in the top five list for Asia-Pacific with a score of 83.03, while Brisbane was fourth on 81.19, followed by Sydney in fifth place, with a rating of 78.56.

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Travel Daily

More room on the river



THERE are still plenty of untapped opportunities for the river cruise segment, despite new entrants and existing players ramping up their strategies, CLIA Australasia boss Joel Katz explained to *Travel Daily*.

"River cruise has a lot of appeal for people who might not have considered cruising in the past - we often hear of guests who might have insisted they weren't suited to cruising, but came back from a river cruise as a convert."

The sector also tends to attract plenty of repeat passengers, giving agents the opportunity to suggest new rivers, destinations and regions for them to explore.

However, Emerald Cruises' Head of Sales Angus Crichton believes the real opportunity is for brands to offer "the ultimate travel experience", where guests can combine a river cruise with a land journey and even a small-ship ocean experience.

"For agents, this is a win-win, their client comes back totally happy and agents have maximised their margin," he said.

While new brands like Celebrity and Trafalgar are offering guests more choice in river cruising,

it also makes differentiation essential, APT Travel Group CEO David Cox pointed out - read more about the topic [HERE](#). *JHM*

Travel to benefit

AUSTRALIA'S middle-income earners - defined as those earning between \$60,000 and \$150,000 per year - expect to increase their spending at the highest rate since 2021, according to the latest UBS Evidence Lab survey.

Some of those dollars are expected to be poured into travel, along with other categories such as entertainment and dining out.

UBS Evidence Lab attributed the economic boost to interest rate cuts, income tax cuts, and salary growth, which now outpaces the rise of common costs such as fuel and household energy bills.

"We think the economy's gaining some momentum after a couple of years on the backfoot," said the investment bank's strategist, Richard Schellbach

"Inflation is no longer as intense and consumers feel like their wages growth is giving them room to spend on discretionary categories again."

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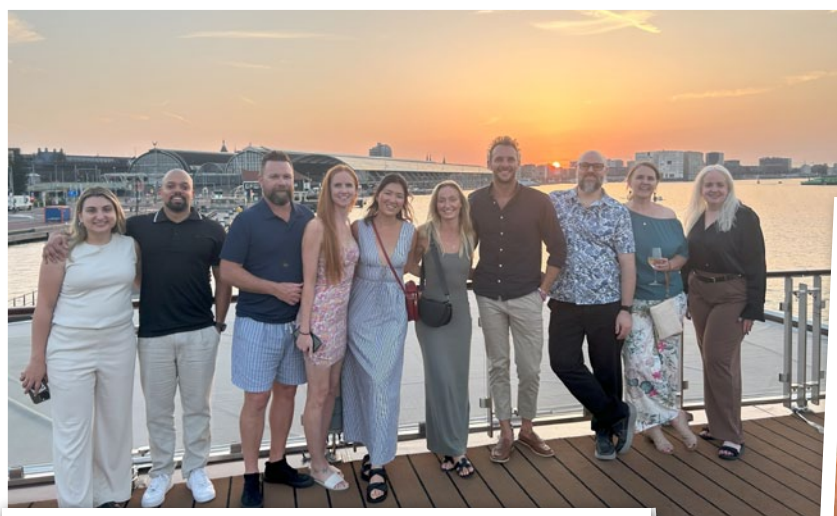
Viking takes agents on a Rhine Getaway

A GROUP of 10 travel advisors, along with their travelling companions, recently completed Viking's eight-day 'Rhine Getaway' river voyage on *Viking Sigyn* from Amsterdam to Basel.

Sailing on one of Viking's award-winning longships, the advisors experienced first-hand the signature service, Scandinavian design and cultural enrichment that sets the brand apart.

Along the journey, the group explored charming ports, including Cologne, with its iconic cathedral, Rudesheim, known for its winemaking traditions, and Breisach, the gateway to the Black Forest.

A standout highlight was the 'Flavours of Alsace' walking tour in Strasbourg, where agents sampled local specialties while soaking up the city's history and charm.



SETTING off from Amsterdam under a picturesque sunset.



KOLCHE Beer Night in Cologne: Erin Bruce, Flight Centre Yeppoon with Kelly Murphy and Shaun Kavanagh, Viking.



THE perfect docking location in Cologne, Germany.



DUTCH cheese making tour in Kinderdijk, The Netherlands.



MATTHEW Lewis; Taylah Pawsey and Robert Di Benedetto, Flight Centre Bayside; and Nicole Klein, Flight Centre Tuggerah.



A MEMORABLE stop at Cologne's most famous landmark.



TEAM dinner in Rudesheim, Germany.



FLAVOURS of Alsace walking tour in Strasbourg: Rick Garside, Flight Centre Macarthur Square; Nicola Bell, Flight Centre Narellan; Shaun Kavanagh, Viking.

EXPLORING the wine bars in Rudesheim, Germany.



ADVISORS enjoying their time on board *Viking Sigyn*.



Experts are crucial

THE Asia Pacific Incentives and Meetings Event (AIME) has announced that its 2026 Knowledge Monday program will take place under the theme 'Expertise Matters'.

Building on the success of 2025's 'We Matter' theme, next year's program will spotlight the credibility, clarity and strategic importance of the business events industry and champions professionals who bring deep expertise.

Curated by BEAMexperience founder El Kwang, Knowledge Monday will open AIME on 09 Feb 2026.

AIME has also revealed its 2026 advisory committee, which sees Anna Patterson, Sight Agency founder and 'Chief Amazement Officer', become the latest industry figure to join its ranks.

Crowne's new jewel

CROWNE Plaza Hobart has unveiled its eighth indoor-outdoor event space, Centurion Sky, which has a capacity for up to 150 guests, cocktail style.

The new venue features a glass ceiling, retractable bi-fold doors, with panoramic views of Mount Wellington, and is ideal for exhibitions, conference breaks, cocktail functions or a long table dinner under the stars.

Centurion Sky can be hired as a standalone venue or an extension of the ballroom, increasing the capacity up to 600 theatre style.

QLD PLANTS THE EVENT SEED

THE Queensland Government is aiming to cement the Sunshine State's status as Australia's events capital with a \$14 million funding boost to enhance and grow "uniquely Queensland" events.

The first round of the revamped Homegrown Destination Events Fund will see more than \$1.5m shared across 31 events taking place in 2026, supporting local experiences that attract visitors and uplift regional economies.

Event operators can apply for up to \$300,000 over three years to pump into local events that promote Queensland, while grants of up to \$40,000 are available to support events that celebrate and showcase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture.

World Science Festival Brisbane, Gold Coast Running Festival, and Port Douglas Carnivale (pictured) were among the 31 events



selected to receive funding.

Additionally, the Great Island Trek on Magnetic Island will receive funding for the first time, highlighting Queensland's commitment to ecotourism.

"Queensland is the home of the holiday which is why we're investing in homegrown events that deliver unforgettable visitor experiences and drive regional tourism," said Qld Minister for Tourism, Andrew Powell.

"These uniquely Queensland events showcase the best of our regions and provide a significant boost to local economies."

Tourism and Events Queensland CEO Craig Davidson added: "Homegrown is not only breathing new life into Queensland's beloved and longstanding community events, but is also investing in emerging experiences that will shape the future of our visitor economy."

"By supporting both legacy and new events, we're strengthening the industry's foundations and creating fresh opportunities for growth across the state."

Applications for Homegrown round two are now open - find out more **HERE**. JM

NZ celebrates conference champions

THE New Zealand Business Events Bid Champions Awards 2025 took place last week, celebrating the industry leaders and academics who secured international events through the valuable Conference Assistance Programme.

Overall, New Zealand secured 64 conference wins in the last financial year with an estimated economic impact of NZ\$78.8 million.

"These bid champions have



secured conferences in areas from health to the environment, law to information technology," said Tourism NZ Chief Executive Rene de Monchy.

"Their dedication in bidding for these events means NZ will play a leading role in shaping the future of these sectors."

Inglis spring offer

THE William Inglis Hotel is offering a \$1,000 booking bonus until the end of Nov.

The credit can be used towards enhancing delegate experiences, whether through upgraded catering, AV support, coach transfers, or wellness add-ons.

For bookings and more details about the promotion from the MGallery Collection in Sydney's south west, please call 02 9058 0365.

NEXT ISSUE: Southeast Asia special report

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Luxury agent network **Virtuoso** has hired **Natalie Bax** as its new Senior Account Coordinator - Member Relations AU & NZ. Bax is a highly experienced marketing professional who has held senior roles with Carnival Australia, Azamara, Royal Caribbean Group and Cruiseco.

Bringing more than 25 years in hotel industry leadership, **Pan Pacific Perth** has hired **Karen Priest** as its new Director of Commercial. Priest is a former Commissioner for Tourism Western Australia and is highly regarded for shaping effective commercial strategies.

Kristy Phillips has been appointed by **Hospitality New Zealand** as the association's new Chief Executive. Phillips brings many years working within the sector to her new role and is currently the association's National Chair, combining this duty with her leadership role running the Barker's Foodstore & Eatery venues in Auckland and Geraldine.

After its 15th birthday, the **Travel Industry Mentor Experience (TIME)** has appointed **Gretel Puisens** as its new TIME Committee Member. Puisens is a self-described passionate advocate for membership and professional growth and brings experience in nurturing emerging talent.

Highly experienced Destination Canada professional **Nancy Steward** has joined **Julie King and Associates** as its new Director of Strategic Partnerships. Steward most recently served as Senior Manager, Global Marketing and Strategic Partnership Initiatives at Destination Canada and will now bring her skills to the body's Australian representative.

Charlotte Wells has joined the team at **Unforgettable Travel Company** as its Global Director of Product and Operations. Wells' new role will see her join the executive team, focusing on strategic product expansion and other key initiatives. Wells moves to Unforgettable from her recent role as Director of Global Tailmade Product at Abercrombie & Kent.

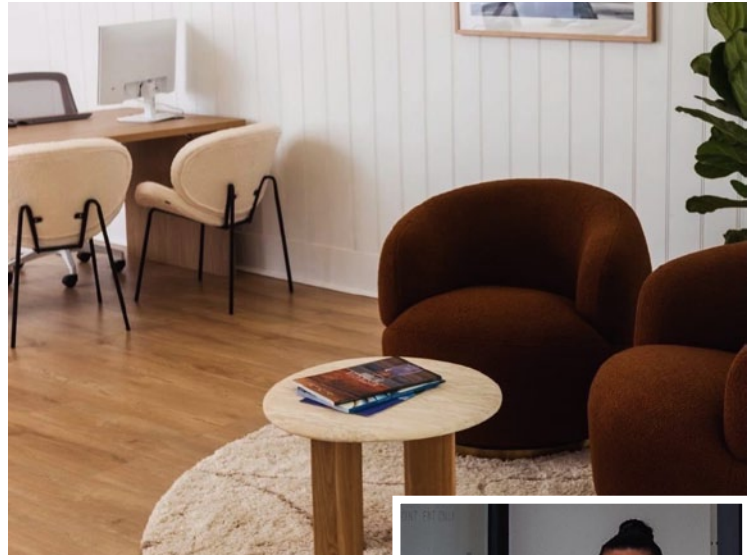
MGM Resorts International has named **Ayesha Molino** as its new Chief Operating Officer and **Gary Fritz** as Chief Commercial Officer.

Aligned with the opening of its new global headquarters in Dubai, ultra-luxury "barefoot hospitality" brand **Soneva Group** has made three senior appointments for its leadership team. The company has welcomed **Joanna Flint** as its new Chief Commercial Officer; **Chris Whitehouse** as Chief Financial Officer and **Abhishek Sharma** as Chief Operating Officer.

Former WebBeds CEO **Daryl Lee** has joined travel technology brand **Dida** as its new Group CEO. Lee steps into a role formerly held by the company's founder Rikin Wu, who now transitions to Chairman.

Based in Ho Chi Minh City, Asian river cruise brand **Pandaw** has brought **Yves Van Kerrebroeck** into the team as its new Commercial Director. After 15 years shaping tourism in Southeast Asia, Van Kerrebroeck has been tasked with helping the line to expand into Europe.

Blake Travel's new digs

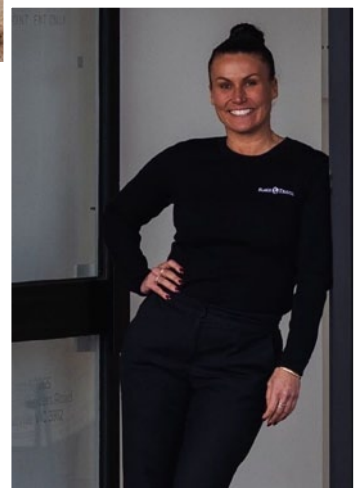


VICTORIA-BASED boutique agency, Blake Travel, has announced the grand opening of its first office on the Mornington Peninsula Shire.

Located at Shop 6/1065 Frankston Flinders Road, Somerville, the new space offers consultations by appointment, with walk-ins also welcome on Thu, owner Ashlea Blake shared.

According to Blake, her agency offers "unmatched attention to detail and personalised service" delivered by "a flexible and family-focused team".

Blake shared photos of herself inside the chic new office space on LinkedIn (**pictured**). *JM*



AKL considers bonds

RETAIL and institutional investors in New Zealand are being invited to register their interest in a fixed-rate bond offer being considered by Auckland Airport.

According to a market update, the fixed rate bonds under consideration would be set to mature in Apr 2031 and will be quoted on the NZX Debt Market.

Westpac and ANZ Bank New Zealand have been appointed to act as Joint Lead Managers.

Cyber attack arrest

A PERSON has been arrested in connection with a series of cyber-attacks that caused days of disruption at several European airports, including Heathrow.

A person in his forties is in custody in connection to breaches of Collins Aerospace.

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HILTON OPENING AT CITADEL OUTLETS



The new Pan Am Hotel by Hilton, part of the Tapestry Collection, is set to open at Citadel Outlets in late spring 2026. This hotel will offer a unique blend of retro charm and modern comfort. The stylish accommodations are designed with international travellers in mind, featuring spacious storage for shopping

finds. Guests will have access to two full-service dining venues and a state-of-the-art fitness centre. This is part of a larger expansion of the Citadel Outlets, which will also include a new "Grand Fountain," which will be located between the hotel and the outlets. **More HERE.**

READY FOR TAKE-OFF: NEW AT LAX

The LAX/Metro Transit Centre, which opened in June, now connects Metro's C and K Lines to the airport via a free shuttle. By 2026, LAX's new Automated People Mover train will link the transit centre directly to the airport's Central Terminal Area, offering a seamless transit experience. The airport's multi-billion-dollar enhancement project continues with Central Terminal Area curbside improvements slated for completion by the end of 2027, including improvements to the inner and outer lanes, lighting, garages, and landscaping. **More HERE.**

NEW SUPERMAN EXHIBIT AT WB STUDIO

The new Superman Exhibit is now on display at Warner Bros. Studio Tour Hollywood. Among the featured displays is the sharp, professional attire of Lois Lane, played by Rachel Brosnahan, showcased next to the Daily Planet ensemble worn by Clark Kent, played by David Corenswet. Book your Studio Tour today to view the new costume additions, and don't forget to explore the Superman lobby that includes exclusive retail only found in the Warner Bros. Studio Store. **More HERE.**



DELTA EXPANDS AUSSIE ACCESS

Fly nonstop to Los Angeles from Sydney (daily), Brisbane (returning Nov 2), and Melbourne (launching Dec 5). Travellers will enjoy the state-of-the-art Airbus A350-900 and Delta's premium facilities at LAX—including the world-class Delta One Lounge.

LA VALUE ITINERARY

Introducing the LA Value itinerary – a handy guide to budget-friendly Los Angeles, your secret trade tool for a well-planned itinerary that allows your budget-conscious clients to experience the best of LA!

Choose from ample free attractions, like scenic Griffith Park and the lively Venice Beach Boardwalk, plus affordable dining options, and hotels with value-add offerings. 'LA Value' joins our collection of four curated itineraries, all designed to streamline your planning process. Ready to explore the full suite of resources?

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WATCH & WIN!

Discover the **LA VALUE** itinerary by watching our informative supporting webinar. **Click **HERE**** to watch. After that, answer this simple question for a chance to WIN one of five \$50 gift cards: Which self-guided tour activity does Kat recommend your clients do on day two? Send your answer to oceania@latourism.org by September 30th!

HISTORIC SILVER LAKE CHURCH TO BECOME BOUTIQUE HOTEL

Hotel Lucile is a new boutique hotel created by Casetta, featuring 25 rooms and located in the vibrant Silver Lake neighbourhood of Los Angeles. The hotel resides in a reimagined church building dating back to 1931. It includes a restaurant and bar, a swimming pool, and a rooftop lounge among its amenities. Conveniently situated just around the corner from the farmer's market, Hotel Lucile offers stunning views of the city from its rooftop. The hotel will begin welcoming guests in autumn 2025. **More HERE.**



DATALAND OPENING IN 2025

DATALAND, the world's first Museum of AI Arts, is scheduled to open late 2025 in downtown Los Angeles at The Grand LA, a development designed by Frank Gehry. DATALAND will showcase art experiences that combine human creativity with artificial intelligence, establishing a new model for artistic expression in the digital age. **More HERE.**

NONSTOP: AUSTRALIA TO LOS ANGELES.

SYD to LAX operates daily, year-round.
BNE to LAX returns 2 November 2025.
MEL to LAX launches 5 December 2025.



KEEP CLIMBING
DELTA