

## Today's issue of TD

*Travel Daily* today features five pages of news, including our **Corporate Update**.

## A river of popularity

**BOOKINGS** for debut Celebrity River Cruises sailings have proved to be extremely popular, with tickets for the 2027 season selling out in under five hours.

The cruise line's President Laura Bethge confirmed all 33 seven-night Danube and Rhine river voyages are now fully booked.

2028 fares will be released to the public in early 2026.

## VV overhauls fares

**VIRGIN** Voyages will launch a new fare model on 07 Oct that will offer customers the choice of three tiers of price.

The new non-refundable Base Fare includes a more basic wi-fi package, offering only light browsing across social media and messaging, as well as a 15-day window for dining reservations.

Changes to names, cabins or dates are not permitted under the Base Fare option.

The Essential Fare is the closest to what was previously offered by Virgin Voyages, providing classic wi-fi service, a 45-day dining reservation window, and the ability to adjust voyage dates using a future voyage credit.

Passenger booking the Premium fare in Sea Terrace categories and below will have a 60-day dining reservation window, premium wi-fi for two devices per person, a bar tab with drinks credit, and priority support line for pre-voyage bookings.

To find out more about the fare structure overhaul, see [HERE](#).

## Topdeck enters new era

**GEN Z** touring brand Topdeck has lifted the lid on its relaunch this week, swapping its 50-seater coaches for a return to small group touring, with fresh itineraries and experiences.

"This new chapter for Topdeck goes big by going small, offering more meals, more inclusions, more choice and more time to explore," General Manager Anna Fawcett declared.

The brand repositioning followed 12 months of research about youth travellers, with Topdeck finding that 68% prefer to travel in groups of 20 or fewer, while 64% believe small group touring to be less stressful.

Food and beverage are also important for this cohort.

Group sizes are now capped at 18 and guests will enjoy longer stays in key cities ranging from seven to 47 days, while transport will include a mix of trains, mini-coaches and local transport.

Itineraries feature culinary experiences, including cooking classes and insider-led food tours.

Guests also have a choice of accommodation, with multi-share as the standard offer and upgrade options available for double, twin



or single rooms.

Meanwhile, the age bracket for travellers has dropped from 18-39 to 18-32, allowing people to make meaningful connections with others in similar life stages.

In addition, Topdeck has rolled out a new yellow and brown colourway and strapline: 'Small group trips packed with more', alongside a refreshed website with improved UI and UX.

Earlier this year, **TD** broke the news that Flight Centre Travel Group was revamping Topdeck (**TD** 27 Aug) due to it becoming an "underperforming asset", which Fawcett explained was due to the changing youth market.

"The reality was that large coach youth touring was in decline in the marketplace and we weren't the only ones suffering from that," she told **TD**. "Every bit of feedback that we got from any of our trade consortia...was that it was really challenging to sell."

Before the rebrand, while Topdeck's small group tours were on the rise, its former large coach touring style experienced a steep decline, she added.

Training for Flight Centre agents has begun, but opportunities for advisors outside of the business will be available in the future, as Fawcett suggested getting in touch with one of Topdeck's BDMs to express interest. **JHM**

## Berkeley revamped

**THE** Berkeley River Lodge in remote Western Australia will emerge from its major three-year renovation and reopen to the public on 01 May next year.

Updates at the property include outdoor freestanding baths, an in-villa mini bar, and new experiences like barefoot BBQs and pool-side massages.



## New commish tool

**TRAVELPORT** has launched a new automated commission tool that it believes will boost revenue for agents around the world.

Under a new deal with Farenexus, contract management solution nexusCMT will be integrated into the Travelport+ platform, enabling advisors to see more commission opportunities instantly while making bookings.

Travelport added the tool will reduce agency debt memos by eliminating errors through automation, and offer streamlined searches across fares and schedules to reduce the time spent on administrative tasks.

## Lines in the spotlight

**MORE** than 20 cruise lines will take the stage next month at Cruise Lines International Association's (CLIA) new Spotlight Sessions on river cruising and expedition cruising.

Sessions will provide insights from individual cruise lines, as well as panel discussions on the rapidly developing opportunities in the sectors - register [HERE](#).

## Carrier scraps paper

**NEVER** afraid to push the boundaries of innovation, Irish carrier Ryanair has announced it will ban all paper boarding passes from 12 Nov.

The shift to accepting only digital passes means that all customers will need to download the Ryanair app, affecting the roughly 20% of pax who currently use paper passes (40 million).

2026 BROCHURES



We've now released our full range of brochures for 2026!

[Click here](#) to check them out, or order via TIFS.

**Bunnik  
Tours**  
Family-run since forever

## David Jones flies with QF

**CUSTOMERS** shopping at David Jones can now earn Qantas Frequent Flyer points as part of a new loyalty and rewards program featuring the two brands.

The new David Jones Rewards program allows customers to earn their choice of either David Jones Rewards Points or Qantas Frequent Flyer Points when shopping either at its department stores or online.

Members of the program can earn three David Jones points or one Qantas Frequent Flyer point for every dollar spent on fashion, homewares, beauty products and much more.

Registrations for membership of the new program have now opened, with the face of the program being the David Jones Dalmatian (**pictured**).

A tiered membership structure of Bronze, Silver and Gold will anchor the new scheme, with an increasing assortment of rewards on offer based on annual spend, while a mobile app will allow members to keep track of their points and perks via a central hub.

David Jones credit card holders can also double their points earned by paying for their purchases with their branded credit card.

In addition to regular points earning, members of David Jones Rewards will also have access to



bonus points events, member-exclusive offers, birthday rewards and more via the tiered program.

Qantas Loyalty CEO Andrew Glance said one in two of its members already shop regularly at David Jones, and the new partnership will unlock billions of new points opportunities.

"Our members are earning Qantas Points at record rates, and our partnerships are proving a hugely popular way for brands to engage and reward their customers," Glance said.

The tie-up follows Qantas signing on earlier this year as David Jones' new credit card rewards partner (**TD** 05 Jun).

The timing is also poignant, with rival brands Virgin Australia and Myer deepening their commercial relationship this week to allow Velocity members to use loyalty points to make purchases at Myer stores (**TD** 22 Sep). *ML*

## BNE's busiest day

**A TOTAL** of 82,779 travellers will pass through Brisbane Airport today, marking the busiest day in its 100-year history.

The traffic surge is being largely driven by Brisbane Lions AFL fans heading to Melbourne for the Grand Final and NRL fans arriving for the Brisbane Broncos semi-final against Penrith on Sun.



## TA launches new brand push

**TRAVEL** Associates (TA) last night launched its new brand campaign, 'The art of the moment', with a glitzy event at the Hayden Orpheum Picture Palace in Sydney.

Centring the push, which goes live on Mon, is a new brand film named after the campaign and depicting TA's luxury advisors as artists crafting 'haute couture' travel experiences for their clients.

The film features a number of TA's advisors and their real life clients elaborating on the relationships they share.

Speaking exclusively to **Travel Daily**, Travel Associates General Manager Rachel Kingswell (**pictured** right), said key to the development of the brand film was ensuring the magic of what the network's agents do was captured and communicated.

"Advisors are the true success of our business," she said.

"The advisors are at the epicentre of everything we do, so this is about how do we bring their story to life, what they do that you can't market.

"It was really the parallel between what a designer does and what our advisors do every single day."

Flight Centre Travel Group Managing Director Luxury Danielle Galloway (**pictured** left) told **TD** luxury travellers crave connection and trust with their advisors, which TA's agents deliver through the way they design travel for their clients.

"You have to be powerful storytellers in travel, and to be able to translate that into a film to tell that story is like a perfect connection," she said.



"That's something that's really powerful for our brand."

One of the key trends in luxury travel is the use of an advisor for hyper-personalised trips, and this is where the magic of TA's agents comes in, Galloway said.

"What we know about luxury travellers is that they value a designed holiday, they do not want an off-the-shelf travel experience or a prepackaged itinerary - what they're after is an experience," she explained.

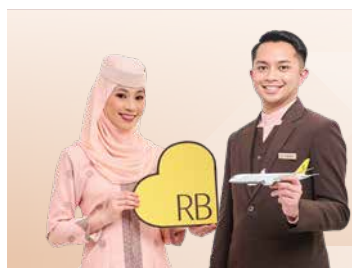
"Many of our clients walk through that door and they do not know what the travel dream is that they are actually after until they have sat down with one of our incredible advisors.

"It's a little bit like designing the wedding dress or picking a fine piece of jewellery or customised art...it actually takes that element of design and curation to really make sure that it has been handcrafted with the right touches," Galloway added. *MS*

## Building in Geelong

**CONSTRUCTION** has begun on a new 11-storey \$75 million hotel tower at Novotel Geelong which will take the hotel's total room count to 234.

The development will also contain 15 apartment-style suites.



EARN  
**Double Commission**

15 September – 10 October 2025

Royal Brunei Airlines will increase BSP commission to 6%

Contact [melrba@rba.com.bn](mailto:melrba@rba.com.bn) or your consolidator for further details. Terms and conditions apply.



ROYAL BRUNEI  
AIRLINES





## Martin takes on CATO role

**THE** Council of Australian Tour Operators (CATO) has appointed Managing Director of G Adventures ANZ Sean Martin the role as interim Vice Chair, effective immediately (**TD** breaking news).

Martin steps into the role following the resignation of Lisa Pagotto from the CATO board last month (**TD** 13 Aug), and will serve through to the industry body's 2026 AGM, at which time the role will be formally open for re-election.

"Sean brings a sharp commercial lens and a genuine commitment to responsible travel - exactly what our sector needs as demand continues to evolve," said Dennis Bunnik, Chair of CATO.

"On behalf of the board, I am delighted to welcome him as interim Vice Chair.

"I also want to thank Lisa Pagotto for her energy and contribution to CATO's work; we



wish her every success."

Reflecting on his new interim remit, Martin (**pictured**) said he was honoured to step into the Vice Chair role and work closely with the larger and smaller members across our sector.

"I've always been incredibly passionate about industry unity, and at this time, it has never been more crucial," he said.

"I believe that by coming together, we can drive growth and innovation in the land supply category," he added. **AB**

## AW Nordic tour

**ADVENTURE** World has released its new Culinary Nordic Trail itinerary, catering to the global trend of authentic, food-focused travel.

While the Nordic countries are globally renowned for its spectacular scenery, rich history and culture, beautiful design, high-ranking happiness levels and quality of life, this new journey is set to redefine the region as a vital culinary hot spot.

The launch is perfectly timed to leverage the consumer appetite for the Nordic lifestyle of balance, nature and well-being.

This itinerary offers a fresh reason to travel to the region, moving beyond cultural highlights to dive into its innovative and sustainable food scene.

Adventure World's Culinary Nordic Trail itinerary is priced from \$3,529ppts.

Highlights include guided food tours in Copenhagen and deluxe food tour in Oslo.

Travel Daily

**SPECIAL REPORT  
OUT NOW**

*Discover the magic  
of slow travel*

**CLICK HERE TO READ**



## Window Seat

**WE SUSPECTED** it wouldn't take long, but efforts to combat overtourism have finally gone overboard.

Beginning next year, the northern Italian city of Bolzano will impose a daily tax of €1.50 Euros (A\$2.70) on visitors who bring dogs with them.

Residents will not be exempt either and will be hit with an annual levy of €100 (A\$178) to offset the impact of their dog in the Dolomites-adjacent city.

Funds raised through the tax will go toward street cleaning and new parks for the use of dogs and their owners.

**TD** agrees with another of the city's initiatives, which requires owners to register their dog's DNA so uncollected droppings can be traced back and the owner fined.



VIKING

The  
**HOLY VIKING!**  
**I NEED TO WIN THIS**  
**INCENTIVE**

A prize so  
extraordinary it feels  
mythical by nature.

One agent wins three cruises  
with air valued at over \$77,000.  
Plus \$24,000 in runner-up prizes.

**MAKE IT YOURS**

## CORPORATE UPDATE

### Corporates flying in style

**FLIGHT** Centre Travel Group (FCTG) has cited a willingness by business travellers to spend on premium airfares as a key driver in its year-on-year profit growth detailed last month (**TD** 27 Aug).

An analysis of the company's FY25 results uncovered some varied trends, with premium economy airfares showing growth of 9% in the year ending Aug 2025, with business class not far behind at 5%.

According to a *State of the Market* survey conducted in Jun and Jul consulting FCTG's client base, 45% signalled an intention to increase travel spend this financial year, and 47% when focusing solely on Australia.

Survey results were based on a random extraction of 1,234 responses, with 524 of these being ANZ-based businesses.

"Rising popularity at the front end of the plane reflects growth and stability across Australian businesses, and it echoes our recent findings that FCM Travel and Corporate Traveller customers are looking to spend more on travel in the year ahead," said FCM Travel and Corporate Traveller Global Chief Operating Officer, Melissa Elf.

Only 7% of FCTG business clients said they were preparing to spend less on travel this year.

Elf said companies were more in tune with the cost of doing business, so were more aware of budgeting for activity that drives real returns, with travel being one



of the non-discretionary items.

"On top of that, there's a real flock to the front of the plane, and businesses are willing to pay for the more expensive cabin classes to get the greatest level of productivity and loyalty out of their travelling staff."

Worldwide, FCTG corporate profits were down, primarily in Asia, although FCM Travel and Corporate Traveller performed strongly in Australia, with record TTV and year-on-year profit in the local market. *ML*

### No hot breaky for BA

**BRITISH** Airways is trialling a change to its Club Europe business class product on short-haul services, in which it has removed hot breakfast from flights departing in the morning.

The trial has seen the removal of traditional eggs, bacon and sausages on domestic routes in favour of a fruit plate and pastry.

A spokesperson for the airline said it is becoming "increasingly challenging" for crews to prepare and serve a hot breakfast on such short journeys, with five routes from London Heathrow affected.

Discover Italy  
with Travel Daily  
Training Academy

Click here to  
discover more

Travel Daily



### A sky-high way to wake



**IHG** Hotels and Resorts will soon claim a piece of history from Nov by opening the world's tallest hotel in Dubai.

Ciel Dubai Marina, Vignette Collection by IHG (**pictured**) will stand as high as 377 metres, with 1,004 rooms and suites over 82 floors in a building incorporating an "eye of the needle" shape.

Each room will offer floor-to-ceiling views overlooking Palm Jumeirah, the Arabian Gulf and Dubai's skyline, with a range of high-end services and facilities available to guests.

These will include eight restaurants and bars ranging from buffets to signature table service, casual cafes and well-known international dining brands.

The hotel will also claim the distinction of being home to the world's highest infinity swimming pool on the 76th floor, with an observation deck also set to open one level below the summit.

Business travellers will have access to an executive lounge and

flexible meeting spaces, while families will also find a range of experiences tailored for kids.

The hotel will offer direct access to the shopping, dining, beaches and attractions of Dubai Marina, complete with a regular water taxi service to Dubai Marina Mall and the city's train services.

Ciel Dubai Marina will be managed by The First Group Hospitality and will also be located close to Ain Dubai, the world's tallest observation wheel.

"We are extremely proud to witness our vision for Ciel Dubai Marina, Vignette Collection come to life in a truly idyllic location, with unbeatable views of the Arabian Gulf and Dubai skyline," said The First Group Hospitality CEO, Robert Burns.

"Standing at 377 meters, the all-hotel tower will redefine upper-upscale hospitality, blending innovation, luxury, and creativity through its striking design, world-class amenities, and breathtaking vistas," Burns added. *ML*



Travel with **CHINA AIRLINES**  
**LONDON** From A\$1,486\*

Book by 05 October 2025

Travel from 26 October ~ 20 November 2025

T&Cs apply. \*Fares are subject to change due to applicable taxes and surcharges. Special promotional seats are limited and available until sold out.



## SPECIALS

Send your special deals to:  
specials@traveldaily.com.au

With the school holidays upon us, visitors to Melbourne can enjoy perks such as zoo tickets, kids activities and interconnecting rooms at hotels including **Lancemore Lindenderry Red Hill**, **Holiday Inn Bourke Street Mall** and **Hilton Little Queen Street**. Kids can enjoy activities such as pizza making classes, family movies and more. Click on the hotel above for their specific deal.

Make the most of the upcoming long weekend with **Scoot's** new deal on flights from Sydney, Melbourne and Perth to Singapore and a host of Asian destinations, with fares starting from \$139. Valid for travel between 13 Oct-19 Nov and 19 Jan-17 Mar 2026 - **CLICK HERE** for info.

Only a few days remain to secure a 20% discount on **Uniworld Boutique River Cruises** itineraries in 2026 - the line's 50th anniversary year. Deals are valid on new itineraries such as the 14-day 'Grand Highlights of Italy and Slovenia' and the ever-popular eight-day 'Castles along the Rhine'. Offers are also available on Egypt river cruising and package holidays incorporating a luxury rail adventure. **CLICK HERE** to find out more.

Travellers can save up to \$510 on **Adventure World's** 'Authentic Mexico' and 'Authentic Costa Rica' itineraries as part of a newly launched Central America campaign. Bookings must be made by 28 Nov and are valid for departures from 05 Jan-31 May for Mexico and 01 Feb-31 Oct 2026 for Costa Rica. **CLICK** on the itinerary name above for details.


Tick Ireland off the bucket list with a special offer from **Collette**, which is taking \$1,000 off a number of its itineraries including 'The Best of Ireland', and 'Irish Splendour'. Valid until 09 Oct, with the code word 'NEWSEASON26' required to be quoted when booking - **CLICK HERE**.

Small-ship specialist agency **Cruise Traveller** has compiled an exclusive collection of offers featuring Seabourn Cruise Line. Packages including **Singapore to Hong Kong**, the **Norwegian Fjords** and **Auckland to Sydney** are now available, offering bonus pre-cruise accommodation and in some cases, free business class airfares. Click on the destination above to access the deal.

Earlybird savings on scheduled **Australian Air Safaris** departures in 2026 end on Tue 30 Sep, with significant savings of up to \$1,800 per person still available. Explore the Flinders Ranges, Lake Eyre and the Birdsville Races or the lush vistas of Tasmania. **CLICK HERE** to see the selection.

Enjoy vibrant Kuala Lumpur with a new special fare from **Batik Air** offering one-way seats from \$174, with 20kg of baggage included if booked by 05 Oct. Travel dates from 10 Oct-20 Nov 2025 - **CLICK HERE**.




As part of its new 'An Invitation to Discovery' promotion, **Explora Journeys**, guests can enjoy up to \$1,500 in credit to spend on shore tours with new bookings on a range of itineraries. Book your cruise before 14 Oct to enjoy the deal. **CLICK HERE** for more details.



## Stay Updated

on the latest travel news

Follow Travel Daily on social media to get your travel news first

## Icons get wild in SA



**ENVOYAGE** has concluded its four-day Icons event in South Africa, which saw the network's top 50 members from around the globe converge to enjoy the best the destination has to offer.

Starting with a rooftop reception in Johannesburg, Flight Centre Travel Group's growing independent division's members set off the next day to explore South Africa's bushlands, immersing themselves in a wilderness safari.

"Icons 2025 was a resounding success, once again, this special event allowed our members to build meaningful connections while experiencing the incredible offerings of South Africa," FCTG Global Managing Director of Luxury and Independent Brands Danielle Galloway said.

The major event partners for Envoyage's Icons gathering were Europ Assistance, Intrepid Travel, Globus Family of Brands, Room-Res, Expedia TAAP, Norwegian Cruise Line and Cover-More Travel Insurance.

Envoyage has also revealed that Vietnam will host the 2026

Icons event from 02-06 Nov, with Intrepid Travel coming on board as the key sponsor.

"We are excited to take this momentum into next year's event and look forward to an unforgettable Icons experience in Vietnam," Galloway added.

Envoyage's global network has grown to include 2,500 independent travel entrepreneurs across the United States, Canada, South Africa, Australia and NZ. **AB**

**Pictured:** The Australian contingent getting in touch with nature in South Africa.

## Intrepid at the UN

**INTREPID** Travel Chief People and Purpose Officer, Meegan Marshall, spoke at the UN Global Compact Leaders' Summit this week in New York City to discuss the role of responsible business in tackling climate change.

"It's a huge honour to represent Intrepid at this global event and to have the opportunity to meet and learn from inspiring changemakers in the climate change space," Marshall said.