



MEL gets Seoul

KOREAN Air has announced its return to Melbourne Airport with a seasonal service to Seoul, operating from 18 Dec 2026 until 14 Mar 2027.

Using a Boeing 787-9, the carrier takes over the route from Asiana Airlines following the two airlines' merger (**TD** 15 May 2026). **JM**

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Sun PhuQuoc names GSA

AFTER announcing plans to expand to Australia last week (**TD** 12 Aug 2026), Sun PhuQuoc Airways has inked a deal with Airline Rep Services to be its exclusive general sales agent for ANZ (**TD** breaking news).

Airline Rep Services - a division of the CVFR Travel Group - will begin trade engagement, distribution development, sales strategy and marketing activities effective immediately, ahead of the Vietnamese carrier's planned 2027 launch in Australia and NZ.

Under the agreement, Airline Rep Services will manage all commercial activities across both markets, including sales, marketing, trade development, reservations support, distribution, and strategic partnerships with the travel industry.

"Airline Rep Services' extensive market knowledge and strong trade relationships make them the ideal partner to support our



long-term growth ambitions in the region," the carrier's CEO Nguyen Manh Quan said.

CVFR Travel Group chief Ram Chhabra said Sun PhuQuoc Airways brings an "exciting new proposition to the market", combining a premium full-service offering with access to a fast-growing leisure destination. **AB**

Origin 'dutches' Oz

TRAVEL packages are now on sale for the debut of a State of Origin match in New Zealand for the first time, with Australian Rugby League Commission confirming Auckland will host Game Two on 16 Jun 2027.

NRL chairman Peter V'landys said the announcement gives rugby league fans the opportunity to lock in their travel plans now in preparation for the historic sporting moment.

"State of Origin is truly unique, it creates an atmosphere unlike anything else in Australian sport - fierce rivalry, raw passion and an intensity that can only be understood by experiencing it firsthand," V'landys said.

Travel and hospitality packages went live at 11am AEST yesterday through NRL Travel, while match tickets go on sale in Nov. **AB**

Entire's tech return

ENTIRE Travel Group has announced that its servers are now fully operational.

See more on the **back page**.

Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today features eight pages of travel industry news, including a photo page from **Cox & Kings** and our **Luxury page**, plus a full page from **Entire Travel Group**.

Advisory goes local

TRAVEL and payment advisory firm 490 Consulting has appointed Sydney-based Kurt Knackstedt as its new MD, where he will look to expand the Orlando-headquartered firm's presence in the region.

Knackstedt was previously the sales chief for Avis in the Pacific.

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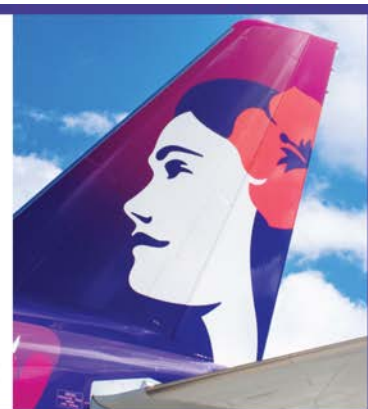
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TD TRAVELDAILY

ON LOCATION

HOBART

Today's issue of **TD** is coming to you from Hobart, where the annual TravelManagers Conference is taking place.

THE second day of the 2026 TravelManagers Conference will see presentations delivered by Intrepid, NCLH & Room.res.com, before attendees unwind with a fun race around Hobart.

Today's member presentation will be led by PTM Ange Bowerman, while the TM office update will be hosted by Leeanne Groves.

In the evening, delegates will take part in the Boot Scootin Bash hosted by NCL, Oceania and Regent Seven Seas Cruises.

TM navigates turbulence

TRAVELMANAGERS (TM) recorded TTV of over \$500 million in the past financial year, despite navigating an array of challenges across the industry.

Speaking to **TD** at the 2026 TravelManagers Conference, TM executive GM Michael Gazal and House of Travel CEO Joe Araullo (**pictured**), explained that bookings experienced a slump from Feb to Apr, but have since made a strong recovery during May and Jul.

Gazal credited the recovery to travellers' willingness to adapt to uncertain geopolitical conditions.

"Some of those clients who may have paused on Europe because it was going to [cost] x amount of money but they still wanted to travel," he explained.

"They were doing shorter trips to Asia and the Pacific where they were now spending as much but still having a break."

Araullo added that as the



Middle East conflict stretched on, PTMs' clients have been less likely to cancel trips.

"As it goes on, people go, 'it has been going on for four months,' so it becomes a bit more acceptable," he said.

"It is almost like the early days of Ukraine - people weren't flying over Ukrainian airspace and then it got forgotten about.

"Then the Middle East crisis comes along - when the ceasefire hit, everyone was [saying] 'this is all good', and they started travelling again," Araullo added.

Gazal and Araullo also cited the Federal Budget announcement in May as another challenge to travel sales, claiming it has created economic uncertainty. *JB*

SIA adds to NDC

SINGAPORE Airlines has rolled out its waitlisting feature to NDC bookings made via the Agent 360 Booking Portal.

The update enables advisors to create waitlisted bookings where eligible, helping them respond to sales opportunities faster. *AB*

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Greenway on deck

INDUSTRY veteran Steven Greenway will take over as Alliance Aviation Services CEO and MD from Stewart Tully, who will remain in the business until 29 Oct (**TD** breaking news y'day).

According to an ASX statement, Tully said it felt like it was the right time to step down, as the company moves into its next phase of strategic execution following its revised wet lease agreement with Qantas and organisational changes.

Greenway was most recently CEO of budget Saudi Arabian carrier flyadeal. *JHM*

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Sydney Thursday, 10 September InterContinental Sydney by IHG

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Window Seat

AN AUSSIE traveller has ignited a heated online debate after complaining about how she was approached by a fellow passenger while boarding a recent flight to Bali.

Madi, a woman from Perth, posted a video on social media detailing how another female passenger made passive-aggressive comments about the fact that she was eating a Whittaker's Peanut Slab while walking along the airbridge.

"I'm just eating my peanut slab in peace and quiet and the lady behind me in the tunnel says, 'Thank God I'm not anaphylactic, thank God I'm not anaphylactic,'" Madi said.

"If I knew I was travelling with someone next to me [with an allergy], I would show appropriate care and consideration," she added.

Some users agreed with the passenger, saying it was inconsiderate to eat nuts on a flight, while others defended Madi, pointing out that airlines already had measures in place for pax with severe allergies.



Travelogix inks two more

EXCLUSIVE

BRITISH cloud-based solutions provider for TMCs, Travelogix, has continued its Australia expansion by signing new contracts with two more travel groups this week.

Sydney-based Sanford Travel has agreed to become a new

customer, which will access Travelogix's data management and analytics platform Analytix so the business can improve both internal reporting and customer-facing services.

Meanwhile, FBI Travel has agreed to extend its agreement with Travelogix for the use of Analytix, following a successful period of collaboration.

"We continue to see strong demand from TMCs looking for better access to real-time data and reporting, and both Sanford Travel and FBI Travel share our belief that technology should help businesses make faster, more informed decisions," founder and CEO Chris Lewis said.

Sanford Travel's Kerby Hasler added that Travelogix's tech had already generated some great feedback from clients on the new-look reports and the quality of insights available.

Travelogix recently formed a strategic partnership with Australian travel network CT Partners (**TD** 20 Apr 2026). **AB**

Wilson joins Air NZ

FORMER Air India CEO Campbell Wilson has been appointed to the Air NZ board, alongside Robert McDonald, who was a long-standing CFO at the airline from 2004 to 2017.

US-based director Larry De Shon will exit Air NZ, while Dean Bracewell and Laurissa Cooney will seek re-election. **AB**

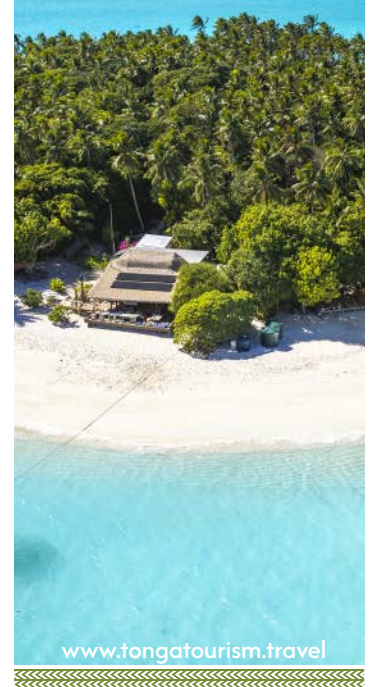
EY goes Gothenburg

ETIHAD Airways will commence a new seasonal service between Abu Dhabi and Gothenburg, Sweden from 17 Dec 2026.

Marking the city's first direct air link to the Middle East and Europe, the carrier will offer four weekly flights until 21 Mar 2027, using A321LR aircraft. **JM**

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TM discusses its four pillars for growth

TRAVELMANAGERS (TM) has identified luxury travel, corporate bookings, cruising and AI as four major growth areas to prioritise in its operations moving forward.

Speaking at the 2026 TravelManagers Conference in Hobart, TM executive GM Michael Gazal and House of Travel CEO Joe Araullo explained that despite a sales slump earlier in the year (see **page two**), the luxury sector remained a strong performer for the group.

"It is just a fact that the people that can afford luxury travel have been impacted less [by economic factors], or are now impacted as much from a financial perspective," Araullo explained to **Travel Daily**.

"If you are that Baby Boomer that has retired, you have got money in the bank, and as interest rates go up, you actually make more money [and] you are less impacted by those financial



issues," he added.

Gazal explained that TravelManagers is committed to educating its PTMs in selling luxury travel to their clients, helped by a high attendance at ILTM events worldwide.

"We had 35 attend ILTM in Singapore, which was a record number for us," he said.

"I think our largest number previously was around 15 PTMs.

"That shows us that there are 35 PTMs in our network that want to learn more about luxury from DMCs to hotels and high-end cruise and tourism board connection," Gazal added.

For both TM and House of Travel, European cruising has been the top selling luxury travel experience across the year.

However, Gazal believes the new investment in both the luxury and cruising sectors will open up fresh opportunities for PTMs and clients.

"We've definitely seen a strengthening of Asia [and] we're talking in the mid- to high-end.

"You have companies like Ritz-Carlton that have got a cruise ship now stationed in Asian waters, and that is the sort of super yacht, high-end luxury end."

Meanwhile, through its partnership with Corporate Travel Services, TM hopes to better "compete in the small-to-medium corporate market".

Gazal explained that there are people in the TM business dedicated to securing accounts for corporate PTMs.

PTMs are also leveraging online booking tools to bolster corporate travel for their clients. *JB*

Stay tuned for TM's approach to AI in tomorrow's issue. *JB*

Another cruise first

NATIONAL Geographic-Lindblad Expeditions has launched its inaugural river expedition, with its seven-night 'Holland and Belgium: Medieval History and Scenic Waterways' itinerary now sailing the Rhine River

Guests will visit historic cities such as Antwerp and Delft, as well as take in flower vistas, iconic windmills and quaint towns.

"This voyage is just the beginning of our expansion in the region, and we look forward to creating even more opportunities for travellers to experience the region," Lindblad Expeditions CEO Trey Byus said. *JM*

UAE missile threat

THE UAE has accused Iran of firing two missiles at its territory, marking the first time the defence ministry detected a barrage aimed at the country in months.

Smarttraveller revised the UAE's Do Not Travel advisory in Jun. *AB*



What's New for 2027-2029

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VA banks on new tie-up

VIRGIN Australia's Velocity Frequent Flyer loyalty program has teamed up with Commonwealth Bank to allow eligible customers to earn points on everyday banking.

From 01 Oct 2026, the initiative will unlock new ways to earn and redeem Velocity Points for the nine million-plus Australians who are members of the bank's dedicated rewards program, CommBank Yello.

Under the new tie-up, Velocity will become part of CommBank Yello's program offering, allowing customers to earn points on a full range of consumer banking products, including savings accounts, home loans, insurance and credit cards.

The announcement marks the first in a series of enhancements to Velocity's financial services offering ahead of the RBA's changes to credit card interchange and surcharge rates, and comes as demand for Velocity Reward Seats continues to grow, with domestic Reward Seat bookings reaching a record high last financial year.

"By bringing together Australia's largest retail bank and Velocity, we're making it easier for millions of Australians to earn Velocity Points through the banking they're already doing every day," Velocity Frequent Flyer CEO Andrew Cleary said.

"At a time when cost-of-living matters, this isn't about spending more, it's about helping



Australians get more value from everyday financial decisions." JM

Agents fill the gap

WHILE more travellers are on board with AI, two-thirds said they would not trust it to book travel on their behalf, Expedia Group research has found.

Sixty-eight percent also stated they preferred a trusted travel company over AI platforms, while just 8% rely on AI platforms like ChatGPT to plan an entire trip.

Loss of control (57%), data privacy (57%) and misuse of personal data (56%) were listed as travellers' main three concerns about trusting AI on their behalf.

Expedia TAAP vice president Robin Lawther said AI "can help prepare for a trip, but it can't replace the confidence that comes from knowing someone can step in and support when plans change".

"The rise of AI makes the advisor role even clearer: using technology to work smarter, while remaining the trusted expert travellers turn to when decisions and support really matter," she added. JM

A Maldivian Escape



TWO Luxury Escapes' Agent Hub travel advisors were lucky enough to test run three of the agency's most popular Maldives packages recently.

Blair Davis from Wolf & Turner Travel Associates in Melbourne and Marcie Bolin from Travel Associates Burleigh on the Gold Coast travelled on the direct

Melbourne to Male flight to experience for themselves the first-ever non-stop flight between Australia and the Maldives (TD 08 May 2026).

The agents also took a scenic seaplane flight to Outrigger Maldives Maafushivaru Resort and enjoyed cocktails and the poolside DJ at SO/Maldives. JM

Pictured: Luxury Escapes Agent Hub host Pill Attlee takes in some tropical sunshine with agents Davis and Bolin.

Fairmont Bangkok

FAIRMONT Hotels & Resorts has announced its debut in Thailand with the opening of Fairmont Bangkok Sukhumvit.

The new property features 416 guestrooms and 58 suites, as well as a North American-French restaurant, a cocktail bar, and a pool club.

An entertainment destination called the Wiggle Room is also slated to open at the property in mid-Sep 2026, evoking the glamour of classic cabaret. JM

La Collection error

A STORY in yesterday's issue about La Collection's new partnerships with Hotel Ranga in southern Iceland and Nimb Hotel in Copenhagen incorrectly referred to the hotels as "Norwegian properties".

The hotels are located in Iceland and Denmark and are correctly described as Nordic properties.

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COX & Kings has officially returned to Australia and New Zealand, celebrating its relaunch with 13 trade events and more than 640 travel advisors in attendance.

Wednesday 19th Aug 2026

The response has exceeded expectations, with strong interest already converting into bookings through its Melbourne-based reservations team.

"We have been overwhelmed by the enthusiasm and support from the trade," said Sara Puglia, sales director Australia and New Zealand.

Bookings made by 31 Oct 2026 will go into the draw to win one of two incredible Cox & Kings trade incentives:

- A place on the exclusive Cox & Kings Famil in 2027
- \$10,000 Cox & Kings travel voucher for one lucky travel advisor to use on their own personal holiday

For more information, please contact Sara Puglia at spuglia@coxandkingstravel.com or 0418 763 823.



AKTG'S Susan Haberle, Deb Fox, Jacqui Tufala and Katrina Thirkell at the Cox & Kings Brisbane trade launch.



AKTG'S Sara Puglia, Karen Turner, Lisa Hunt, Haberle and Elaine Hargreaves at the Melbourne launch.



CONNECTING with attendees in Perth.



NZ AGENTS enjoying the festivities.



HABERLE with George Colvin-Slee and Anoushka Kudav at the NZ launch.



THIRKELL and Puglia in Brisbane.



CELEBRATING in Canberra.



PRIZE-WINNING travel advisor Zanna Athfield from Flight Centre Eastridge with AKTG staff.



COX & Kings Adelaide trade launch.



MEETING with agents in Perth.

Zeppelin/rail combo

GOLDEN Eagle Luxury Trains and Viva Holidays have partnered to offer new experiences in 2027 featuring the famed Zeppelin airship.

Combining luxury rail with an airship flight for the first time, the exclusive 10-day tour will include chartering Golden Eagle's Danube Express, departing from Vienna on 16 Jun and travelling through Austria, Germany, Liechtenstein, Italy, Slovenia and Hungary.

Passengers will embark on a private scenic Zeppelin flight in southern Germany, flying at low altitude over Lake Constance, followed by a private champagne reception and welcome from Graf Albrecht von Zeppelin, the great-grandson of Zeppelin inventor, Ferdinand von Zeppelin.

The group will then enjoy an after-hours tour of the Zeppelin museum.

A 12-day Uniworld luxury river cruise extension can also be added to the immersive itinerary, sailing from Prague to Paris.

"The exclusive elements of the entire Zeppelin experience will allow guests to fully immerse themselves into this historical mode of transport," Golden Eagle Luxury Trains founder Tim Littler explained. *JHM*

AUTUMN HAILED AS THE NEW SUMMER

LUXURY travellers are increasingly booking northern autumn holidays and taking advantage of the shoulder season, according to insights from Virtuoso, which has seen bookings and sales up by 59% and 69% respectively.

According to a new report from Virtuoso, "the entire northern autumn window has shifted from afterthought to headline season".

The trend is most prominently seen in Europe, with year-to-date sales at Virtuoso's preferred hotels up 39% through to Jun.

Sep bookings have strengthened since 2023, with volumes now almost matching Aug numbers.

The report showed that Sep bookings rose from 79% of Aug's volume in 2023 to 92% in 2025.

"Shoulder season has officially shed its bargain reputation,"



Virtuoso asserted.

"Bookings to Europe this autumn climbed 49% even as rates rose more than 7%, lifting overall sales 64% and showing that travellers are choosing the season for what it offers rather than what it saves."

Another trend the organisation is predicting is the rise of 'city-maxxing', which involves pairing

destinations together to create longer, multi-city itineraries.

Popular combinations include France and Italy, France and the UK, and Italy and Switzerland.

According to Virtuoso, these itineraries are being led primarily by private aviation bookings, with demand mainly coming from millennials, running 6% ahead of the global average. *JHM*

RSSC lets light in with new crystal installation

REGENT Seven Seas Cruises (RSSC) has unveiled a new showstopping crystal light installation aboard the *Seven Seas Prestige*, which debuts in Dec (**TD** 14 May 2025).

Paying homage to the line's first new ship class in a decade, the light feature was created as a contemporary interpretation of a traditional chandelier, rising through 11 decks within the Starlight Atrium.

The fixture will serve as the centrepiece for RSSC's first-ever



sound and light show, *Lumiere*, which will take place aboard *Seven Seas Prestige* as a daily pre-dinner event.

Guests will sip on champagne at Galileo's Bar while watching the choreographed display of light and music each night. *JHM*

Lux Africa fam trip

THIS is Africa is inviting travel agents to its Roar & Explore Luxury Africa Fam for 2027, an 18-day journey through Southern Africa.

For a chance to win a spot, agents need to participate in the points-based competition running from now until 31 Aug 2027.

The top six advisors on the leaderboard will secure their spot, with two wild-card places also on offer - click **HERE** for more info. *JHM*

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The Hayman Spa at **InterContinental Hayman Great Barrier Reef** has partnered with Sydney-formulated skincare and wellness brand **Subtle Energies**. The collaboration will see the spa incorporate the brand's products into its bespoke treatments, including an advanced biotech lifting facial, 24K gold age-defying facial, and a three-hour 'rejuvenate and restore' journey within the resort's private Bamboo Loft Suite.



Minor Hotels has announced **Avani Kota Kinabalu**, a 352-key premium lifestyle hotel, is set to open in Q1 2027. The property will mark the debut of the Avani brand in Sabah - a key gateway to Borneo. Approximately 10 minutes from Kota Kinabalu International

Airport, the hotel will feature five dining and social venues, including an all-day dining restaurant serving Sabahan, Malaysian, Korean and international cuisine, with live cooking stations and local specialties.



Reservations are now open for **Conrad Kuala Lumpur** ahead of its slated opening in late 2026, marking the debut of Conrad Hotels & Resorts in Malaysia. Located in the Golden Triangle, the hotel will feature 481 rooms and suites. Guests will enjoy

modern in-room technology, including tablets, and can dine at six different venues. Kids can participate in The Young Explorers program, while adults can relax at the Conrad Spa.



Ovolo Sydney is preparing to undergo a transformation to propel it into a new era of luxury. Located on the waterfront just 10 minutes from the CBD, the heritage-listed property is set to gain a new suite category, with two Rockstar Suites to feature

spacious living and dining areas, private balconies overlooking Woollloomooloo Bay, and private saunas and ice baths.



Radisson Hotel Group has announced the signing of **Bloom Hotel Bali Ungasan**, a member of Radisson Individuals. Expected to open by the end of 2029, the hotel will offer 145 rooms, including 22 suites, across two four-storey buildings positioned around a central swimming pool. Guests will be ideally positioned to experience many of southern Bali's leading attractions, such as Melasti Beach.

Great pyramid of Surfers



AUSTRALIA'S largest private premium hotel owner Dr Jerry Schwartz has filed plans for a golden pyramid art gallery in Surfers Paradise.

Schwartz, who owns the Hilton and Paradise Resort on the Gold Coast alongside other Australian properties, is seeking approval from the Gold Coast City Council to develop the Art Evolution Gallery - a 1,000m² landmark that features an interactive facade (artist's impression **pictured**).

The proposal details fish scale-inspired satin gold panels across a 23-metre pyramid-shaped three-level art gallery dedicated to surrealist Salvador Dali, next door to the Paradise Resort on the Gold Coast Highway.

"The architecture acts as a sculptural anchor, designed to interact with the resort's lively atmosphere," according to Schwartz's proposal, which also includes a fine-dining restaurant and boutique cinema on the site used as the display centre for the neighbouring Ruby development.

If green-lit, the project would not be the plastic surgeon's first art gallery, with Schwartz also behind the Real Human Anatomy

Exhibition at Hilton Surfers Paradise, and a gallery at Rydges Resort Hunter Valley dedicated to artist Tanya Loviz's work. *JM*

No mobile, big worry

ALMOST one-in-three travellers (32%) reportedly feel unsafe abroad when there is no access to mobile data, according to new research compiled by travel eSIM provider Sailly.

In a survey of travellers from eight countries, alongside those who feel unsafe without data access, 45% said they feel safe and 23% remained neutral.

American respondents were the most confident, with only 19% citing concerns, while travellers from Spain and Italy were the most likely to feel vulnerable, reporting concerns at 41% and 46% respectively.

Research also found that younger travellers were most concerned about mobile data when abroad, in contrast to those aged between 45 and 54, who tend to opt for offline alternatives such as printed directions, physical tickets and prearranged meeting points. *JB*

WE ARE BACK BABY!

We're delighted to let you know that our systems have been restored and we are fully operational.

Thank you for your patience as we've worked through this restoration. The outage was caused by a system issue that was experienced by our third-party IT service provider. While the disruption was beyond our control, our whole team recognises the impact it had on you and your clients. We sincerely appreciate the support, encouragement and understanding we received throughout this challenging period.

We value our partners, and every member of the Entire Travel Group team is excited to be back doing what we do best, helping you create unforgettable travel experiences for your clients.

We're also proud to share that Entire Travel Group has been named a finalist in the NTIA Awards. Thank you to everyone who nominated and voted for us. We're honoured by this recognition and grateful for the trust and confidence you place in our team.

In appreciation of your support and loyalty, we're offering Travel Advisors a \$100 Digital Mastercard with every booking deposited by 30 September 2026. Consider it our way of saying thank you for standing by us during an extraordinarily challenging time.

We look forward to continuing to support you and your clients with the service, expertise and care you have come to expect from Entire Travel Group.

Thank you again for your ongoing partnership and support.

Brad McDonnell
Managing Director



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