

Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today features seven pages of news, including our **Corporate Update**, plus full pages from:

- Entire Travel Group
- CVFR's TravelTech-Konnect

Double commission

INSPIRING Vacations is offering double commission rates of up to 20% on all eligible new bookings made between 10-31 Aug 2026, and follows three record-breaking agent sales months for the operator across the financial year.

Bookings must be made with the operator's travel agent team via phone or chat, and commissions will be applied at the time of booking, with no caps on the boosted earnings. **AB**

Win your way to Tahiti

WIN a hosted Tahiti famil in Jan, as direct flights from Australia prepare to return to the destination - see more on **page 8**.

Fiji has got it wrong: Long

THE Australian Travel Industry Association (ATIA) will hold an urgent meeting with the Fijian Government to discuss its upcoming Tourism Services Tax, which CEO Dean Long said reflected a "complete lack of understanding of how the travel booking ecosystem works" (**TD** breaking news yesterday).

As reported by *Travel Daily* last week (**TD** 14 Aug 2026), the 5% levy - which takes effect on 01 Sep 2026 - will be applied retroactively to existing bookings, forcing agents to recoup the additional funds from clients.

Last week, Helloworld wrote to Fijian suppliers requesting they collect the impost directly from customers during trips, rather than its advisors having to alter bookings and create unnecessary administrative complexity and customer dissatisfaction.

Long said that retrospective application of taxes such as this was "an absolute no-go".

"Once a customer has paid, that price is locked in, [and] sending a fresh bill after the fact is not tax collection, it is a broken promise dressed up as policy," he added.

The ATIA chief also noted that the poor implementation of the tax - which was done with "zero consultation" with industry - has left travel agents and tour operators "stuck in the middle".

"[Agents] are being asked to explain and administer a cost they did not create, could not have anticipated and have no control over," Long said.

"[Meanwhile], basic practicalities such as who collects the tax, how it applies to net rates and existing contracts, and where a 'supplier' ends and an 'agent' begins, remain unclear - even for new bookings."

ATIA said it would update its members and media as the situation develops.

For reactions from advisors affected by the levy - see **p5. AB**

Hickey hopeful on VA

EXCLUSIVE

WHILE there is yet to be an announcement regarding Virgin Australia launching flights at Western Sydney International, the airport's CEO Simon Hickey is confident the Aussie carrier will "come along" on the WSI journey.

"We are talking to VA obviously and...I think WSI epitomises the types of passengers that Virgin is targeting," Hickey said.

"So I'm sure in time they will come along," he added.

Virgin Australia and WSI signed a memorandum of understanding in 2019, which saw the carrier provide input into the airport's design and passenger needs, as well as sustainability policies, baggage handling, security, freight capacity, and more. **AB**

Learn all about NDC

DISCOVER NDC with TravelTech-Konnect, with two Singapore Airlines tickets up for grabs - more on **page nine**.



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Big banks trim insurance

TWO of Australia's big banks have curtailed the value of travel insurance for cardholders in part due to mandated changes to credit card interchange fees and surcharging coming into force from 01 Oct (**TD** 16 Jul 2025).

As part of its decision to close Awards program from 29 Sep and create CommBank Yello, Commonwealth Bank has started issuing updates to customers this week about changes to its range of travel insurance benefits.

These include some insurance



features being discontinued, such as expenses incurred related to the loss of baggage and personal goods or baggage delays.

Meanwhile, Gold and Business Gold cardholders will lose trip cancellation cover altogether, while other cards will see a 50% reduction in cover to \$2,500.

Westpac has also announced that it is making similar cuts in value to a range of its Altitude Mastercards, replacing complimentary international travel insurance with a much narrower medical-only coverage.

Domestic travel insurance and rental vehicle excess coverage in Australia will also remain.

View the full list of changes for CBA **HERE** and Westpac **HERE**. **AB**

Viking orders two

VIKING has placed an order with Fincantieri for two new ocean ships, set for delivery in 2032, in a deal reportedly worth between €500m (A\$900m) & €1b (A\$1.8b).

The vessels, which will be constructed in Italy, will accommodate 998 passengers across 499 cabins. **JM**

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CTM UK milestone

CORPORATE Travel Management (CTM) has reached a "major milestone" in its bid to settle key accounts in the UK that were impacted by overcharging issues (**TD** breaking news).

The company has negotiated deals with key clients that will see 86% of the refunds owed for FY25 repaid in stages by 30 Sep 2027.

Offers from affected clients in FY25 require CTM to refund £87 million (A\$166.7 million), £11 million (A\$21 million) of which has already been paid.

Meanwhile, accounting issues relating to contracts entered into by CTM in 2025 will see the business pay affected clients £12 million (A\$23 million) to settle debts, of which £6 million (A\$11.5 million) relates to 1HFY26.

"These agreements [show] that we can address legacy matters responsibly while continuing to deliver the high-quality service our customers rely on," group CEO Ana Pedersen said. **AB**

Sydney-KL scrapped

AS PART of a raft of network changes, AirAsia X will suspend its long-running Sydney-Kuala Lumpur route from 30 Nov.

The carrier said the decision reflected a combination of increased cost pressures and softer demand on the route.

AirAsia X's Sydney to KL service has been in operation for more than 14 years.

Meanwhile, Perth-Denpasar services will increase to 35 flights a week from Dec, while the Melbourne-Kuala Lumpur route will return to daily services. **AB**

ANA commits to PER

ALL Nippon Airways (ANA) will increase direct flights between Tokyo-Narita and Perth from three times a week to daily from 25 Oct through to 27 Mar 2027.

The decision follows the Japanese carrier operating the same seasonal increase last year, with Japan a key market for WA.

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Scoot to Guiyang

SCOOT will commence flying to Guiyang in China for the first time on 26 Oct, providing competitive prices for Aussies from its local hubs of SYD, MEL and PER.

One-way economy services via SIN to Guiyang start from \$270.

MEL drops off tool

MELBOURNE Airport has released an online journey planner in preparation for new pick-up and drop-off zones going live in Oct (**TD** 29 Jun 2026).

Drivers picking and dropping off travellers on international flights will need to exit left from the Tullamarine Freeway earlier and use the new elevated roads to access the passenger zones.

The changes are designed to eliminate the congested departures ramp and pave the way for \$4.5 billion in privately funded projects to expand the international terminal.

Access the new tool **HERE**. AB

Chile adds Oz to top six

EXCLUSIVE

AUSTRALIA is now one of Chile's top six priority source markets, with the national director of the country's tourism agency telling **Travel Daily** to expect a "lot more" activity Down under next year.

Cristobal Benitez was recently in Australia for the first tourism roadshows held by Chile since 2019 (**TD** 14 Aug 2026), and on the sidelines of those gatherings, indicated that Chile is looking to form more partnerships with Aussie wholesalers and operators, as well as host famils in 2027.

One of the reasons why Chile is making Australian travellers a priority has been a surge in interest over the last year.

Benitez revealed that Australian arrivals had increased by 80% when compared to last year, adding that the removal of visa requirements (**TD** 25 Sep 2025) had formed part of that upturn.



Another factor given was improved air connectivity, with direct Qantas flights performing well from Sydney to Santiago, as well as direct LATAM services from both Sydney & Melbourne.

When asked if he would like to see more players enter the market, Benitez said his primary wish would be for Qantas to add more frequencies from Sydney.

While details are yet to be confirmed, Benitez said Chile's tourism agency is already planning a return to Australia at a later date, and is also working out the specifics on inviting more Australian wholesalers, tour operators and media to the country next year. AB

Europe leads spend

EUROPE has continued its dominance as the world's leading leisure destination, with new WTTC figures showing the continent captured one-third of all global summer spend in 2025.

Travellers in Europe increased their outlay to around US\$2 trillion (A\$2.8 trillion), with global tourist spend also increasing by 3.5% year-on-year.

France, Spain, Italy and Turkiye were among the most sought-after summer destinations, pushed along by a growing diversity of source markets and robust transport connectivity.

Italy is projected to lead the next phase of growth, with the WTTC report predicting a 4.7% increase in leisure spending, followed by Spain (+4.3%), Turkiye (+4.1%) & France (+2.6%).

Europe's growth is expected to continue beyond the summer months and into 2026, when it is forecast to expand by 3.7%, outpacing the global average. AB

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A taste of Nagano



NAGANO Tourism Organization's Australian representative Helen Wong recently hosted a group of agents on a famil through the Japanese prefecture, around 250km northwest of Tokyo.

The international trade group, which included Wendy Wu Tours' Samantha Stewart (pictured centre), highlighted the region's culinary offerings and attractions.

A standout of the trip was a multi-course Shogun Dinner inspired by feudal lords travelling along historic Nakasendo Trail centuries ago.

The group also learned how to make soba noodles, dined on a traditional chestnut rice dish in the historic Kiso Valley, and visited the Yukawa Sake Brewery.

"For Australian travellers looking to venture beyond Tokyo, Kyoto and Osaka, Nagano offers something refreshingly different," Wong said.

"Here, every meal tells a story... every dining experience becomes part of the journey itself." JM

EventsAir's AI plan

EVENTSAIR has launched Planner Assistant to all planners on its platform, allowing users to ask complex questions and uncover opportunities without needing to build reports or navigate dashboards.

The time-saving AI tool can summarise answers in plain language and turn insights into chart planners for users.

Planner Assistant is integrated so that it can assess responses using live data across revenue, rego, sessions, speakers & more.



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WSI launch carriers "happy"

EXCLUSIVE

JETSTAR flights scheduled to operate from Western Sydney International "sold out within hours", the airport's CEO Simon Hickey has revealed, adding that all of its launch carriers are "very happy" with ticket sales so far.

Speaking with **Travel Daily** in the lead-up to WSI's first passenger flights on 25 Oct, Hickey said demand had been very healthy across both domestic and international flights.

So strong has the interest been for Jetstar tickets, that yesterday the carrier shifted its WSI-Gold Coast frequency from four times a week to daily, adding to double daily WSI-MEL services and three flights a week to Brisbane.

"We can be very confident that Qantas and Jetstar will continue to grow at WSI and they are very confident in the opportunity,"

Hickey explained.

"WSI is not Sydney's second airport, it is Australia's best airport and the experience is going to be very different because we have introduced a lot of technology...that is very considerate of the passenger experience," he added.

Hickey also noted that WSI has already had a positive impact on air connectivity across the nation.

"We have seen expansion in Brisbane, Melbourne and Perth, so

everybody's getting ready for WSI and the lift that is coming as a result of new capacity being provided in Sydney," he said.

WSI is also likely to send airfare prices in "the right direction", Hickey claimed, stating that more capacity and competition in Australia will ultimately impact pricing and also cajole all carriers to "lift their game". AB



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SYD investigation

AN INVESTIGATION has launched into the taxiing near-collision between two Qantas jets at Sydney Airport this week.

A Qantas spokesperson told nine.com.au that the airline supports the investigation led by the Australian Transport Safety Bureau (ATSB).

"Our aircraft was cleared to proceed following instructions from Air Traffic Control," they explained.

SYD has suffered from staff shortages recently, which have likely led to three other incidents.

ATSB chief commissioner Angus Mitchell said they would all be treated as isolated cases, as they often involved "well-trained and well-qualified pilots" who had stepped in to halt the aircraft.

"It is a concern to us that it even got to that stage," he said. *JHM*

Train up on Tahiti

TAHITI Tourisme has launched a newly enhanced Certified Tahiti Specialist Programme, giving Australian and New Zealand advisors more ways to deepen their knowledge and ability to sell the Islands of Tahiti.

The new platform acts as a one-stop hub for training, bookings, supplier connections, consumer leads, events and resources, and can be accessed across mobile, tablet and desktop.

Advisors will progress through four levels, earning points through lessons, assessments and specialty badges - more **HERE**. *JM*

Agents vent frustration

THE fallout regarding the implementation of Fiji's Tourism Services Tax (TST) has been felt by many advisors who regularly sell the destination, with several reaching out to **Travel Daily** to vent their frustration about the tricky spot they have been left in.

TravelManagers South Pacific specialist Belinda Hackett (pictured) said she was facing a mammoth administrative task under the current tax model.

"I am now being advised by some suppliers that the additional TST needs to be collected from clients through us.

For an existing booking, this potentially means the wholesaler needs to re-invoice me, I then need to re-invoice my client, contact them to explain the additional charge, collect another payment, pay the additional amount back to the wholesaler and then reconcile the booking again," Hackett explained.

"Multiply this across a large number of existing Fiji bookings and it becomes an enormous administrative exercise."

Fellow TM advisor Deahann Avery said her primary concern was that there is less than two weeks before the levy becomes active, and there is no clear, streamlined process across resorts and wholesalers as to how this tax is going to be collected.

"For Fiji specialist agents with a large volume of existing bookings, the proposed process is simply not manageable," she said.



"It becomes even more complicated for clients with multi-resort itineraries, transfers and other components, as there doesn't appear to be one consistent collection method.

"Some resorts have indicated that they will collect the tax directly from guests, while others appear to require it to be collected before travel." *AB*

Back-Roads boosts

BACK-ROADS Touring has announced enhanced loyalty rewards, with returning guests to receive \$250 per person off future tours, up from the previous \$150 per person saving.

Additionally, enhanced multi-tour discounts offer up to \$350pp off each tour for guests booking six or more tours.

The company has also guaranteed all 2026 departures, giving travellers greater confidence to book in advance, and is continuing to offer advisors 50% off eligible tours this year, while also increasing the companion discount from 20% to 50%. *JM*



Window Seat

QT HOTELS & Resorts is going 'mutts' for International Dog Day on 26 Aug, with the hospitality brand giving out pup-friendly cakes to celebrate the occasion.

Guests checking in to a Pup Yeah! stay between 26-31 Aug will be treated to two complimentary dot cakes - one for them, and the other for their furry companion.

Served in QT's signature black-and-white striped cups, each pup-sized dot cake is baked by dog bakery Woof Gateaux using dog-safe, sugar-free trimmings.

"We know we're late to the trend, but dogs don't do trending - they do timing," QT Hotels & Resorts said.

"And it's always cake o'clock - consider it dessert diplomacy, everyone gets a piece."

Pup Yeah! rooms start from an additional \$120 for three nights, and include luxury treats and in-room dining.



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Luxury Escapes' **Adam Schwab** reveals the hottest emerging destinations.

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Travel Daily

CORPORATE UPDATE

ATMC discusses surcharges

THE Association of Travel Management Companies (ATMC) recently held a meeting providing support for the organisation's members ahead of the Reserve Bank of Australia's surcharge changes, which will take effect from Oct (**TD** 16 Jul 2025).

The meeting was a valuable chance for members to come together and connect through impactful discussions, with payments industry leaders



from American Express, Mint Payments, and WEX offering further information on how to adapt to the surcharge ban.

"With the Oct changes fast approaching, this session gave our members clear guidance on what's changing and why, alongside a bigger-picture view of payments as a more sustainable and transparent approach to client payments," said chair David Goldman (**pictured**).

"For corporate travel management companies navigating these reforms with their clients, that combination of regulatory clarity and commercial insight is invaluable." **MS**

Green MICE guide

BCD Meetings and Events has released a practical guide to help organisations plan sustainable meetings and events.

The guide includes frameworks and checklists on destination and venue selection, as well as carbon measurement and offsetting.

Case studies in the new feature also show how BCD has adopted these practices in real life. **JHM**

Preferred pairings

PREFERRED Hotels & Resorts is targeting bleisure travellers with its new 'business with balance' property pairings that combine a centrally located hotel with a complementary resort, wellness retreat or countryside escape.

For example, the duos include the Pendry Manhattan West paired with the Pendry Natirar, set on 500 acres of woodlands in New Jersey, and in Sao Paulo with the Hotel Unique with NOR Hotel and Spa in the mountains. **JHM**

SYD ticks Multiplex

SYDNEY Airport (SYD) has appointed global construction firm Multiplex to lead its T2-T3 terminal project (**TD** 05 Feb 2026), which will offer passengers 12 new swing gates.

The construction forms part of SYD's \$6 billion capital works program planned over the next five years, ensuring it can accommodate a forecasted 72 million annual pax by 2045. **JB**



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MTA goes Platinum



MTA - Mobile Travel Agents has concluded its High Achievers 2026 series, which celebrated its top-selling advisors from around the country at events in Perth, Adelaide, Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane.

The network also unveiled Platinum Reserve, a new reward

tier developed to acknowledge agents who reach the highest level of achievement within its national network.

"Platinum Reserve was created for advisors who have gone above and beyond over a sustained period," MTA group general manager Lesley Owen said.

"We have advisors across Australia doing amazing things for their clients every day, and it's important we take time to [note] those achievements." **JM**

Cruise to the eclipse

WINDSTAR Cruises' *Wind Surf* is set to sail in the path of totality in 2027 near Malta for the last solar eclipse visible from continental Europe for decades.

On 02 Aug '27, for close to three minutes, guests will be able to view the eclipse as part of the nine-night round-trip 'Total Solar Eclipse from Greece and Malta' departing Athens on 27 Jul 2027.

Wind Surf is now undergoing a \$7.5m refurb, set for completion in Dec featuring remodelled suites and updated staterooms.

TM Thriller in Manila

TRAVELMANAGERS has announced that its annual national conference next year will be held at Shangri-La The Fort in Manila from 24-26 Aug.

This year's TravelManagers conference ended this week in Hobart, following three days of education and celebration with over 400 PTMs & suppliers. **JHM**



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Pan Pacific Hotels is offering up to 25% off Club rooms and suites across its six Aussie hotels for stays of two nights or more. On until 31 Oct, the Club Privilege offer also includes complimentary Club Lounge access, where guests can enjoy daily breakfast for two, afternoon refreshments, evening drinks, canapes and other perks. Find out more [HERE](#).

Couples can save \$500 on **Cosmos'** entire North America 2027 collection when they book and make a deposit by 30 Oct. Included in the promotion is the 13-day 'The Canadian Rockies' round-trip from Vancouver, now available for \$3,898 based on 23 Apr 2027 departure. Click [HERE](#) for more information.

Skydive Australia is offering 15% off tandem skydives and digital gift vouchers at any of its eight dropzones. The Father's Day sale runs until 06 Sep, using the promo code 'DADSJUMP' - call 1300 663 634.

Specialist solo tour operator **Just You** is offering savings of \$200 on spring tours, including the five-day 'Icelandic Splendours' itinerary departing 03 Oct 2026, which is now priced from \$5,099. For more details, click [HERE](#).

Adina Apartment Hotel Sydney Darling Harbour has launched a special offer to celebrate its reopening following a year-long refurbishment. The 'Housewarming Special' includes 15% off stays, plus a bottle of wine and cheese board on arrival. Book and stay by 30 Apr 2027. Click [HERE](#) to find out more.

With **Wendy Wu Tours'** limited-time earlybird sale, travellers can save up to \$4,000 per person on all 2027/28 tours across destinations including Japan, China, Southeast Asia, India, Europe, and more - see [HERE](#).

Regent Seven Seas Cruises is offering up to 50% off select sailings when booked by 30 Sep, including the 10-night 'Old World Exploration' voyage from Rome to Barcelona, which departs 01 Nov 2026 - details [HERE](#).

For a limited time, travellers can save up to \$700 on select **Railbookers** 2027 and 2028 holidays, like the popular eight-day 'London, Paris and Rome' itinerary, or the nine-day 'Grand Berlin, Prague, Vienna and Budapest' trip. Explore more earlybird deals [HERE](#).

AAT Kings has unveiled new deals on its New Zealand range, with the 21-day 'Spirit of New Zealand' tour reduced from \$14,350pp to \$12,198pp for the 26 Nov 2026 departure. Click [HERE](#) for details.

Cruisers can enjoy last-minute savings of up to 53% on select 2026/27 departures with **Swan Hellenic**, as well as US\$300 onboard credit per guest and a free wi-fi upgrade. Find out more [HERE](#).

Uniworld is offering a discount of up to \$4,000pp on 'India's Golden Triangle & the Sacred Ganges' departures between Dec 2026-Mar 2027. Call 1300 370 792 to take advantage of the exclusive deal.



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APT partner on track



APT Travel Group (ATG) this week welcomed senior leaders from scenic rail journey company **Armstrong Collective** to its head office in Melbourne.

Leaders from both businesses came together to celebrate the long-standing partnership and discuss future opportunities for growth in the Western Americas.

Armstrong's Rocky Mountaineer remains one of the most iconic journeys in Canada, and is featured across a number of APT's North American itineraries, including the popular 'Rockies Icons' journey, where guests travel in Rocky Mountaineer's GoldLeaf Service, as well as Travelmarvel's 'Reflections of the Rockies' itinerary, which features SilverLeaf Service.

Their newest product, Canyon Spirit, has also been incorporated into both APT and Travelmarvel's program for next year.

ATG chief executive officer David Cox said the visit highlighted the strength of the relationship between the two companies.

"Armstrong Collective has been a valued long-term partner for

APT Travel Group and it was great to spend some time together discussing the opportunities ahead," he said.

"Rocky Mountaineer is one of those experiences that really resonates with our travellers, and while our demand for Canada and Alaska holidays remains strong, partnerships like this play an important role in delivering the exceptional journeys our guests have come to expect." *MS*

High before the drop

ONE of the pilots of an Air India flight which plummeted 300 feet during a flight from Phuket to New Delhi earlier this month has tested positive for cannabis.

The Airbus A320 was carrying more than 100 passengers, 20 of whom were injured, in addition to four cabin crew members, when the aircraft suddenly dived.

Both pilots have been removed from duty as the investigation continues, with Air India committing to drug testing all of its flight crew, rather than the 10% required by local laws. *MS*

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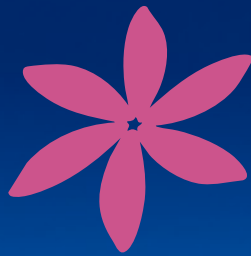
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