

Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today features six pages of industry news, including our **Business Events News**, plus a full page from **Star Clippers**.

Discover Globus

GLOBUS family of brands (GFOB) is inviting agents to attend its nationwide trade event series, 'Small Groups. Big Discoveries - The Ultimate Showcase'.

From mid-Sep, the roadshow will visit 29 locations across Australia - click **HERE** to see the full list of dates and locations, as well as to register.

Attendees will receive the latest updates and sales from GFOB while enjoying complimentary food and refreshments and the opportunity to network. *JM*

Arnica goes off the Map

THE former GM of Australian Geographic Travel, Bryan Arnica (pictured), has launched an international representation collective to help connect regional Australia with travel trade around the world.

Beyond the Map will work directly with travel advisors and tour operators across Europe, the United Kingdom and North America to drive greater visitation, longer stays and increased visitor spend across regional Australia.

Arnica, who is relocating to Europe, will build long-term relationships with trade through regular sales calls, training, events and ongoing engagement.

"If our members are generating more international business because travel advisors understand who they are and what they offer, then we've done our job," Arnica said.

"The broader outcome is more visitors travelling beyond Australia's major gateways, staying longer, spending more in regional communities and discovering a side of Australia many never knew existed."

Beyond the Map offers two membership categories - the Signature Collection, showcasing a curated selection of standout regional accommodation and touring experiences, and Regional Members, which brings together complementary operators.

Launching with a select group of



founding members, Beyond the Map will initially focus on helping them generate more international business before expanding its international roadshow program in 2027. *JM*

Japan quake effects

FLIGHTS at Aso Kumamoto Airport, the main international gateway of Japan's Kumamoto Prefecture, have resumed today after a magnitude-7.1 earthquake rocked Kyushu on Tue local time.

Domestic and international flights were initially grounded while the airport carried out safety inspections.

Additionally, all 200 tourists travelling in 15 tour groups on the southern island at the time of the quake have been reported as safe, the Travel Industry Council of Hong Kong has confirmed.

Structural damage occurred to several roads, bridges and buildings, and prompted the temporary suspension of Kyushu Shinkansen (bullet train) services.

The Kumamoto Castle - a popular visitor site - also sustained damage. *JM*

Explora to the river?

MSC Group's passenger division is reportedly studying the feasibility of entering the European river cruise market, according to *Shipping Italy*.

The maritime publication cites "several industry sources" who have indicated the company is carefully analysing the prospect of launching in the crowded space using the Explora brand.

MSC Mediterranean Shipping Company group president Diego Aponte recently denied any diversification of its fleet.

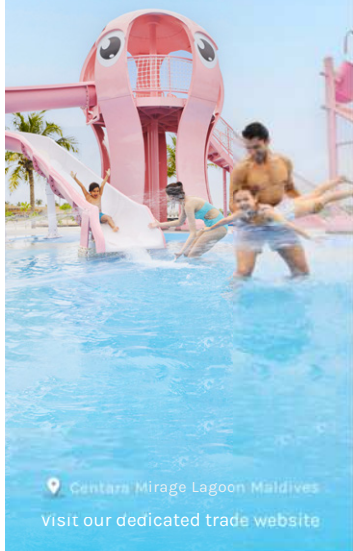
MSC has been contacted by **Travel Daily** for comment. *AB*

Star Clippers sale

STAR Clippers is offering savings of up to \$800 per couple on selected holiday packages - find out more on the **back page**.

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Flydubai boosts Italy

FLYDUBAI has expanded its services to Italy to cater to strong seasonal travel demand, with flights to Naples increasing this week to a daily frequency, while the Milan-Bergamo route will become double-daily from today.

MEANWHILE, Flydubai will resume flights between the UAE and Budapest from tomorrow.

The service starts as a three-times-weekly frequency, before increasing to a daily frequency from 25 Oct 2026. *JM/JB*

FCTG to add 3,500 bots?

FLIGHT Centre could potentially add 3,500 non-human AI agents to the business in the future, the company's global leisure CEO James Kavanagh revealed at the CAPA Airline Leader Summit in Adelaide this week.

"We currently have 3,500 agents who are employed by us, and 3,500 independent agents who are actually partners with us, so that's 7,000, and I see a future where we can probably have another 3,500 AI agents that are working with us," Kavanagh said, according to *The Australian*.

The executive also discussed an experiment Flight Centre recently ran, where AI bots called agents within the company and at rival businesses to ask for quotes, negotiate rates, and book travel appointments.

Following that, Kavanagh said he could imagine a future where human clients could use an AI agent acting on their behalf.

"The question then is, if the business has a surge in agents, you might not even know they're human, so it gets you to think about what might be an agent-to-



agent conversation as opposed to exclusively human," he said.

Despite the growth of AI platforms in recent years, Kavanagh conceded that there is still a "trust block" for many people in terms of payment.

"It's taken 30 years for the adoption of online bookings to reach 65%, so the big question is how long will it take AI to do the same?" he pondered. *JHM*

Montenegro visa

MONTENEGRO will update its visa policy from 01 Nov 2026 to align with that of the European Union, putting the country on track to join the EU by 2028.

Travellers will be able to submit visa applications through third-party hubs, as opposed to only through Montenegro's diplomatic and consular missions.

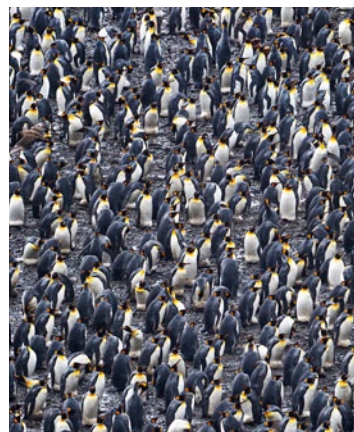
Meanwhile, nationals of Belarus, China, Russia, Saudi Arabia and Turkey will lose visa-free access to the country. *JM*



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Vintage Rail 2027

VINTAGE Rail Journeys' brochure and full program for next year is now available, with three distinctive tours and special event departures on offer throughout New South Wales.

Highlights of the new program include the 'Riverina Rail Tour', the 'North Coast Rail Tour', the 'Golden West Rail Tour', and the 'Bathurst Race'N Rail'.

Each of next year's journeys includes a pre-departure Sydney Harbour morning discovery cruise for the first time.

Guests will also enjoy immersive off-train experiences, including river cruises, visits to museums and gardens, and insights from local guides.

Additional upcoming themed departures will be announced shortly - **CLICK HERE** for info. *MS*

PER up for grabs

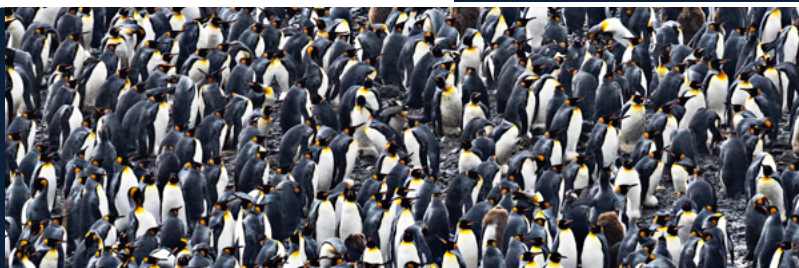
PERTH Airport is back on the market, with Rest Super rumoured to be a potential buyer.

After an unsuccessful sale process in 2023, The Infrastructure Fund and Australian Retirement Trust have engaged investment bank UBS to seek buyers for their holdings in Perth Airport, according to a report in *The Australian*.

Rest Super could acquire a stake for at least \$600 million. *JHM*



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Sentosa spreads the word Down Under

EXCLUSIVE

THE Sentosa Development Corporation (SDC) has concluded its first-ever Australian travel trade roadshow, bringing key updates about the popular Singapore destination to more than 200 travel advisors in Perth and Melbourne.

Sentosa recently finalised its tourism development master plan for the next two decades, and part of those efforts included investing greater resources in Australia to both increase visitation and assist with future development concepts.

Marquee announcements made during the trade mission included a new tie-up with Scoot, which from Aug offers Aussies flying with the carrier several exclusive privileges on Sentosa.

Passengers can access discounts of up to 50% and complimentary admission at participating attractions when they present



their Scoot boarding pass.

Another initiative Down Under has seen the SDC launch the Sentosa Culture & Heritage Pass, bundling more value and cultural experiences into a single ticket so that visitors don't have to reach for their wallets on trips.

Another major initiative has seen the SDC look to develop itineraries to suit the specific tastes of Aussies, recently inking a deal with Luxury Escapes to host opinion leaders in Aug and Sep as part of a partnership with the Singapore Tourism Board to create more personalised experiences for Sentosa.

Speaking with *Travel Daily* while in Australia, SDC divisional director, business & experience development, Addison Goh, said Australia is a priority market as

the island destination embarks on a major 20-year upgrade.

"Australia is our fourth-largest source market, we get about 1.3 million visitors annually, and year-on-year that number has been increasing," Goh explained.

"From 2024 to last year, we recorded about an 8% increase so we love the Aussies and we hope more will come and visit."

Goh added that from Jan to Jun this year, just north of 600,000 Aussies visited Singapore, with the country broadly marketing to baby boomers, families, and the established Singaporean traveller.

Goh revealed that the SDC is currently pitching to hotel developers to add more accommodation to its existing 4,000 hotel rooms on Sentosa.

The SDC is also on the hunt for an Aussie partner to help promote a new screen-free treasure hunt experience for families, soft launching in Sep. AB



Window Seat

PASSENGERS heading to LaGuardia Airport should be prepared to have a robotic pup sniff their carry on, as the airport has introduced one of the first robot inspection dogs in its Terminal B.

Created by ABM Performance Solutions, in partnership with Skild.ai, the not-so-furry friend will be patrolling the terminal floor, ensuring facilities are up to standard and operating as per usual, along with spotting any suspicious behaviour.



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IndiGo posts a loss

INDIAN low-cost hybrid airline IndiGo has recorded a quarterly loss of ₹2.4 billion (A\$36m), which has seen it remove nine leased aircraft from its fleet.

The challenging "broadly flat" operational period pushed the carrier into the red for the full year, with IndiGo removing mostly older planes. *MS*

VS inks air taxi deal

VIRGIN Atlantic and Joby Aviation have signed a partnership which will see the airline become the American company's exclusive partner for electric air taxi services in the United Kingdom.

The partnership will see passengers able to book an air taxi through VS out of LHR and MAN. *MS*

TAF connects with sector

TRAVEL Agent Finder (TAF) has opened its internal directory Travel Trade Connect to the wider travel industry for the first time offering businesses a free seven-day trial to test its effectiveness.

Built in 2021 as a useful survival guide during the pandemic, Travel Trade Connect offers travel companies a one-stop shop for independent travel agents to quickly find the right specialist, products or partners for clients.

According to TAF founder Anna Shannon, the service has spent the past four years operating in the background inside the broader members area.

Member agents have also been using Travel Trade Connect to search for key items such as specialist training programs, fams, incentives, and to access a list of upcoming events.

"Until 2020, I was a home-based agent myself, so I built the tool I always wanted myself - one place to find the right trade contact,

Rail Europe expands

RAIL Europe has expanded its European portfolio with the addition of Italian operator Arenaways, opening up a lesser-known side of Piedmont to international travellers.

The regional line connects seven stops - Cuneo, Busca, Costigliole Saluzzo, Verzuolo, Manta, Saluzzo and Savigliano - offering the opportunity to build a compact slow travel itinerary around Piedmont's food, culture and local communities.

Along the route, travellers can visit the Castello della Manta, home to late-Gothic secular frescoes, explore the medieval centre of Saluzzo, or stop in Savigliano to see Piazza Santa Rosa, one of Italy's best-preserved medieval squares.

Tickets are available through standard point-to-point fares, with children aged between four and 11 receiving a 50% discount. *JM*

TRAVEL TRADE CONNECT Australia's Travel Industry Hub

information and resources, searchable by keyword in a few seconds without digging through a zillion emails," Shannon said.

From today, any Australian travel supplier or agent support service, tour operator, cruise line, wholesaler etc. can join for a single annual flat fee of \$487.

To be eligible, applicants must provide a commissionable product or service, or provide support to Australian travel agents and trade in Australia. *AB*

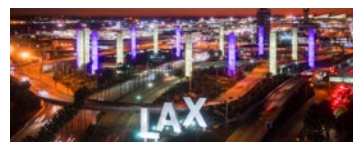
US down 2.5% in '25

INTERNATIONAL travellers flying into the US declined by 2.5% in 2025, dropping by 900,000 to 34.3 million, according to new data from the National Travel and Tourism Office (NTTO).

Florida leapfrogged New York as the most-visited state for international air travellers, attracting 9.34 million visitors, while New York reeled in 9.087 million, followed by California, with 6.607 million, aided by the FIFA World Cup, which saw more than 560,000 fans flock to Los Angeles across eight matches.

International travellers visited 1.4 states on average in 2025, with most (75.4%) only visiting one state, indicating a preference for deeper exploration of one destination instead of a jam-packed multi-state holiday.

Aside from shopping and sightseeing, the stats revealed that international visitors were seeking out national parks and monuments (33.9%), art galleries and museums (28.3%), as well as small towns and the countryside locations (27.6%). *JM/JB*



TA Indigenous plan

TOURISM Australia (TA) has unveiled its sixth Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan, designed to ensure that First Nations communities play a larger role in supporting tourism development nationwide.

The new strategy document was developed in consultation with First Nations tourism leaders, with goals set in five key areas: race relations, equality & equity, historical acceptance, institutional integrity, and unity.

"We know that travellers have a deep desire to connect with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures when they visit Australia, and through tourism experiences can do so in all corners of the country, in diverse and authentic ways," Tourism Australia MD Robin Mack said. *JB*

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Veritas on the rise

VERITAS Events has made a series of appointments across its leadership team, with the aim of driving the agency's continued growth.

Lisa Deaves has been promoted to director of operations after spending 16 years with the company.

Her new role will see her not only continue to lead the operations function but also strengthen service delivery and support business growth.

Sarah Galbraith, who has been with the agency for 12 years, has been appointed to the role of director of brand, experience & partnerships.

The expanded remit will see her help strengthen the company's market position and drive client engagement, new opportunities and long-term growth.

Additionally, Taylah Dolan has entered the newly created role of head of marketing, tasked with leading the agency's marketing initiatives.

She has worked in communications roles across the Australian Radio Network, Claxton Speakers International, Airtrunk and A.P.E Events.

Meanwhile, Donna Latta has been promoted from senior manager - operations to the role of general manager, operations. *JB*

Sun shines on Qld events

VISIT Sunshine Coast Business Events hosted its Sunshine Coast Showcase in Mooloolaba last week, welcoming 60 event buyers from South East Queensland.

The showcase connected buyers with local operators specialising in accommodation, venues, experiences and event services, with attendees collectively representing \$22 million in potential business.

"We have a lot of new product on the Sunny Coast, offering interesting and fresh options for business event buyers," said Visit Sunshine Coast's head of business events Ali Thompson-Ennis.

"We have an integrated, friendly, professional and high-quality destination offering that - when combined with our beautiful surrounds, big blue skies and welcoming locals - creates an exceptional



proposition for conferences, incentives and business events."

The event's formalities began at Pavilion Mooloolaba, where guests were welcomed with cocktails overlooking the sea before participating in a site tour of Mantra Mooloolaba Beach.

This was followed by a trip along the Esplanade, led by a DJ and saxophonist, to the newly opened Avani Mooloolaba Beach (**TD** 05 Mar 2026), where guests took part in interactive trivia, lunch, a site tour and drinks at the hotel bar.

The showcase will continue its national roadshow in Melbourne on 14 Oct. *JB*

Drewett to lead the way in Queensland

AUSTRALIAN Business Events Association (ABEA) Emerging Leaders Council member Hannah Drewett (**pictured**) has been recruited by Tourism and Events Queensland as its new business events leader.

She has joined from event marketing company Arinex, where she served as business development manager.

From 2017 to 2018, Drewett also took part in the Queensland Government's



Young Tourism Leaders Program, aimed at encouraging more Queenslanders to enter the tourism industry.

Drewett said that she is looking forward to working with the DMC to stimulate events across Queensland. *JB*

ITB hits Singapore

TRAVEL Tech Asia 2026, hosted by Berlin-based ITB, is set to return from 21-23 Oct at Sands Expo & Convention Centre in Singapore, bringing together more than 100 technology providers, travel businesses and buyers.

Highlighting this year's event is the inclusion of a dedicated hosted buyer program, focused exclusively on travel technology.

The program is designed to connect solution providers with technology-focused buyers, representing hospitality, travel agencies and destination management companies (DMCs).

Delegates will also receive the All Access Pass, providing entry to the coinciding ITB Asia and MICE Show Asia under a single registration.

The pass gives delegates access to all three exhibition halls, conference sessions, networking functions and pre-scheduled meetings via the event app.

Confirmed exhibitors for the event include Agoda, Airalo, China Mobile International Limited, DerbySoft, DragonPass, Flywire, GoGlobal Travel, Juniper Travel Technology, Korean Tourism Startup Centre, Rakuten Travel Xchange, RateHawk, SiteMinder and Trip.com. *JB*



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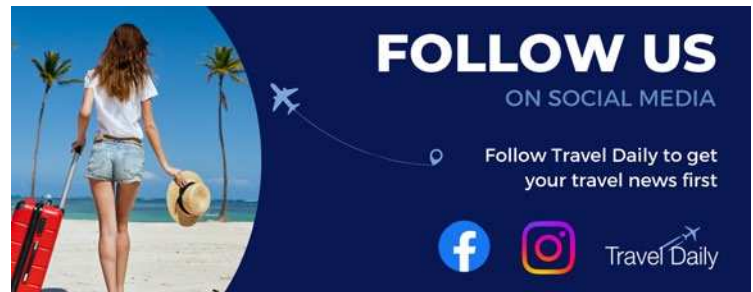
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The **Port Authority of NSW** has named board member **Justine Jarvinen** as chair, replacing David Marchant. She has been a non-executive director on the board for the past four years and has also held advisory roles at several companies including Exxon, Shell, Caltex and JBWere.

Chris Mills has joined **Accor** as its new vice president customer for Accor Plus, following a year away from the hotel group. He joined from the NRL where he served as its GM for major events, assets, and product strategy. Before his departure, he was Accor's VP loyalty & partnerships for the Middle East and APAC.

Nauru Airlines has announced the appointment of **Wendy Bowden** as its new chief executive officer. Prior to spending seven years with Alliance Airlines, she was with the Nauruan carrier from 2010 to 2018, serving as its chief financial officer.

The **Gold Coast Convention and Exhibition Centre** has appointed **Avril Harris** into the newly created role of director of event delivery. She joined from Experience Gold Coast, where she served as executive director for events. Other experiences include working with Major Events Gold Coast, as well as playing a part in organising the 2018 Commonwealth Games.

World Travellers has announced the appointment of its new GM, **Jodie Burnard**, effective 10 Aug. Prior to a six-month contract with PR agency Showponi, she spent 14 years with FCTG NZ, most notably serving as head of communications, PR & group partnerships. Other roles have included being global product leader at Envoyage and general manager marketing & creative service at Stella Travel Group.

Ben Goschnick has been appointed by **Qatar Airways** as account manager leisure for Victoria and Tasmania. He joined from G Adventures, where he spent four years as a business development manager for NSW and ACT. His career also includes stints at Chimu Adventures, This is Africa, Tucan Travel, and Infinity Holidays.

The **Travel Corporation's (TTC)** finance director **James O'Donnell** will be stepping down from his role, a decision that will also see him leave the Council of Australian Tour Operators (CATO) Committee on 31 Jul. He served as TTC's CFO since 2002, in addition to being on the CATO committee since 2021.

Steve Born has left his role of chief marketing officer at **Globus family of brands (GFOB)** following 25 years at the company. In a statement released by GFOB, Born left to "begin a new chapter".

Princess Cruises has appointed **Louise O'Hare** as its new state manager for NSW and ACT. She joins the cruise line with over 20 years of experience, most recently working as a sales executive at Emirates since 2011. Her travel career began as a supervisor on Virgin Atlantic Airways.

Inside new LATAM fleet



LATAM has revealed the details of its new Embraer E195-E2 fleet, which will begin operating with LATAM Airlines Brazil in the final quarter of the year.

Part of the aviation group's wider fleet overhaul (**TD 09 Jul**), the 24 new planes will feature a total of 136 seats arranged in a 2-2 cabin configuration, with two seats on each side of the aisle.

The aircraft will also offer economy and premium economy (**pictured**) cabins, with up to 20 seats available in the latter, depending on the configuration.

Those travelling in premium economy can expect additional legroom, greater seat recline, and personalised onboard service, while all guests will enjoy seats equipped with adjustable

headrests, reclining backrests, personal device holders, and USB-C charging ports.

Additionally, the Embraer E195-E2s will feature SES's latest satellite connectivity technology, which is available for free for LATAM Pass members.

"While these are new aircraft, passengers can expect the same distinctive LATAM experience they know and trust," said Paulo Miranda, VP of customers at LATAM Airlines Group.

"Every addition to our fleet strengthens our ability to offer a comfortable, connected, and personalised journey, reflecting what our passengers value most," he added. *JM*

Airbnb policy tweak

AIRBNB has appointed David Spielfogel as its new global head of public policy, following the departure of Jay Carney.

Spielfogel joined from bike-share company Lime, where he served as chief business officer.

He also played a pivotal role in regulating short-term rental policy in the city of Chicago under then-mayor Rahm Emanuel. *JB*

E5 joins UTracks

ACTIVE travel brand UTracks has introduced the E5 Alpine Crossing to its collection, with two self-guided itineraries - a standard trip and a comfort option with upgraded hotel stays.

The 3,200km trail runs from the Atlantic coast of France to Verona in northern Italy, although it is most famous for the section between Oberstdorf and Merano, one of Europe's best-known multi-day hikes. *JHM*



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