TRAVELDAILY
traveldaily.com.au
Monday 2nd Nov 2026

Today's issue of *TD*

Travel Daily today features six pages of the latest industry news, plus a full page from **Entire Travel Group.**

UK backpacker move

PRIME Minister Anthony Albanese is set to ask British Prime Minister Andy Burnham to introduce regional work requirements for UK backpackers during a bilateral meeting at the Commonwealth leaders' forum in Antigua and Barbuda today.

The PM is seeking changes to the UK-Australia free trade agreement, which currently allows British working holidaymakers to stay for up to three years without completing regional work.

Albanese is not proposing a cap on arrivals, but wants backpackers to spend time in regional Australia to help address labour shortages. *ZH*

Garuda gets flexible

GARUDA Indonesia has enhanced its Manage My Booking service, now complementing its flexible ticketing policy launched in Apr.

Available on both the airline's website and the FlyGaruda app, the service allows passengers more flexibility in adjusting their flights to suit their travel needs, offering unlimited flight changes, free of change fees.

Those who book via third parties may still experience fees. *JB*

Club Med shakes Pacific

MICHELLE Davies (**pictured** right) has departed her role leading Club Med in the Pacific to take on an expanded leadership position across Singapore, Malaysia and emerging markets throughout Southeast Asia (***TD*** breaking news).

Davies will relocate to Kuala Lumpur, with Marc Letourneau (**pictured** left) appointed as her successor as general manager of Club Med Pacific, overseeing Aus and NZ, effective 01 Oct.

During her time leading the Pacific business, Davies has overseen a period of continued engagement with the Australian travel trade, including strengthening the company's relationships with agents and expanding opportunities for the trade to connect with the brand.

Among the initiatives during her tenure was the launch of Club Med's dedicated home-based agent conference, providing a new platform to bring independent consultants together, build product knowledge and strengthen their connections with the resort operator (***TD*** 11 Nov 2024).

Club Med also saw recognition at the National Travel Industry Awards during Davies' leadership, winning the Most Popular Accommodation Group category for the third year running in 2026.

Taking over the Pacific position, Letourneau brings 28 years of experience with Club Med, having previously held several positions



across Australia and New Zealand before spending the past six years leading Club Med's Japanese and South Korean markets.

His return to the Pacific combines an established understanding of the Aus and NZ markets with extensive international leadership experience, having overseen two of Asia's key travel markets.

He is expected to utilise his local knowledge including the growing appeal of Japan for Kiwi ski travellers and the opportunities it presents for Club Med. *ZH*

Heron into Sealink

SEALINK is refocusing on marine transport following Kelsian Group's divestment of its Tourism Portfolio to Journey Beyond on 30 Sep (***TD*** 09 Sep).

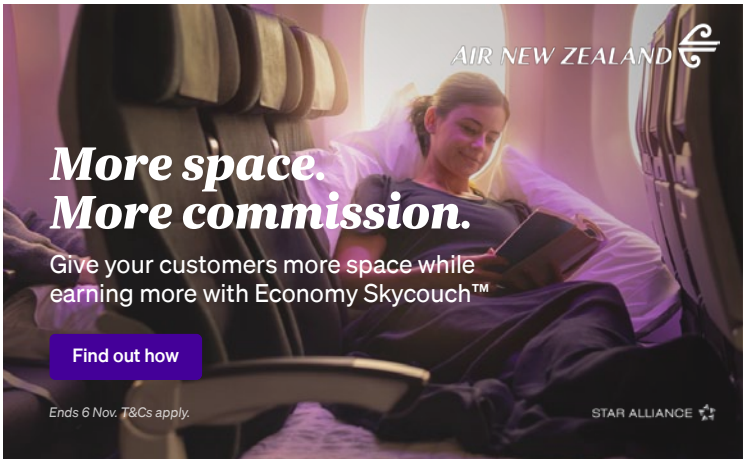
Craig Heron has been appointed as COO, bringing more than 20 years of maritime and operational leadership experience, including most recently as GM, Port Operations at Spirit of Tasmania operator TT-Line.

SeaLink operates passenger, vehicle and freight ferry services across SA, Qld and WA and is preparing to enter New Zealand through its acquisition of Auckland operator Belaire Ferries, which will commence on 01 Jul 2027, supported by five new vessels over five years. *ZH*

Taking a good Clip

THE Star Clippers 2027 brochure is out now through Entire Travel Group, alongside a range of discounts and webinars.

See more on the **back page**.





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TRAVELDAILY ON LOCATION

HOBART

Today's issue of *TD* is coming to you from Hobart, where Celebrity Cruises' *Celebrity Solstice* is docked.

CELEBRITY Cruises' *Celebrity Solstice* has become the first cruise ship to call Tasmania this season, docking in the Apple Isle's capital this morning.

A delegation from Celebrity, the Federal Ministry of Tourism, Tourism Tasmania, and other industry executives met at the waterfront today to celebrate *Solstice's* arrival, which brought in around 3,000 passengers to Hobart.

Tourism Tasmania is celebrating the occasion with a special bespoke shore excursion for the press group sailing aboard the ship, with ***TD*** the sole trade media title in attendance.

VJ challenger eyes 2027

THE CEO of a yet-to-be-named Vietjet domestic carrier, David May, has confirmed plans to take off in the middle of 2027 operating high frequency routes between Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, the Gold Coast, Sunshine Coast and Cairns.

Speaking with the *AFR* in his first public disclosure about the touted plans (***TD*** 29 Jun), Cherrie Aviation's May said the airline was not looking to start a price war with Qantas and Virgin Australia by offering ultra-low-cost fares in Australia.

Instead, May said the carrier's focus would be on building high-frequency schedules that allow it to deliver an attractive product on certain routes, leveraging its access to a large fleet of planes.

"As our fleet grows, we will grow our network, but our strategy is to build density," he said.

May also revealed the proposed new player's commercial proposition would use the same technology and systems used by parent carrier Vietjet, including for its loyalty programs.

However, Cherrie Aviation faces challenges to make the plan a reality, with the company still negotiating the rigours of obtaining an air operator's certificate from CASA.

Parent group Vietjet was also issued a global order freezing the carrier's assets by the UK court (***TD*** 19 Oct), complicating its access to aircraft. *AB*

More from Lindblad

NATIONAL Geographic Lindblad Expeditions has announced the final set of voyages for its 2028-29 deployment, highlighted by trips to the Galapagos islands, Costa Rica, Egypt and Peru.

The additions include brand-new itineraries, extended journeys and more options for exploring ports of call.

In the Galapagos, there are now eight itineraries on offer, ranging from seven to 17 days.

The added collection has also introduced a brand-new 15-day itinerary, connecting the wilderness of Costa Rica and Guanacaste highlands with Panama's rainforest, Pearl Islands and the Panama Canal.

Egypt's new itinerary connects Cairo to Abu Simbel, joined by dedicated Egyptologists and photo instructors to provide greater context on the country's most renowned landmarks. *JB*

Turkiye disruption

SMARTRAVELLER has advised that the UN Climate Summit taking place from 09 to 20 Nov will see increased security measures, road closures and movement restrictions around the city of Antalya.

Turkiye remains at Level 2. *JB*

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McDonnell joins key advisor committee

ENTIRE Travel Group managing director Brad McDonnell will join ATIA's Accreditation Advisory Committee (AAC), where he will help to shape key standards from solvency requirements to complaints resolution.

"Accreditation matters to me, and it is why I am so pleased to be bringing additional insights from the CATO membership's experience into this work," McDonnell (**pictured**) explained.

"As more foreign-based DMCs and travel businesses enter the Australian market, accreditation is becoming an increasingly important point of distinction."

The Entire chief will join chair David Walker and vice chair Gina Norman on the AAC, which also includes Brett Dann, Lauren Gray, Karen Deveson, Scott Darlow, Chad Carey, Rebecca Day, Stephen Brady, Kylee Ellerton and Judy Tanner.



Reflecting on the merger of CATO and ATIA, McDonnell said it gives the industry the opportunity to come together under a common accreditation framework, with suppliers and travel agents now being held to the same standards.

"[The merger] also means we can speak with one voice about what accreditation means and the standards that underpin it.

"That matters when agents are choosing the suppliers they trust and partner with, and ultimately gives consumers greater confidence in the businesses behind their travel arrangements," he added.

ATIA said it was continuing to deliver on the CATO/ATIA merger deed, which required the former to appoint an interim member to the AAC until the next appointment in 2027.

"The CATO and ATIA integration is working the way the deed said it would, and Brad's appointment is a great example," CATO acting CEO and director Mira Yates said.

"He brings a career in wholesale distribution, so the CATO membership has a strong voice on the AAC from day one.

"Come 2027, CATO will review the nominations and recommend to the ATIA board, so the pathway is clear," she added.

The AAC also played a central role in the recent review of the ATAS Charter and Code (***TD*** 17 Oct 2025), working alongside state and territory governments, the Consumer Federation of Australia and Choice. *AB*

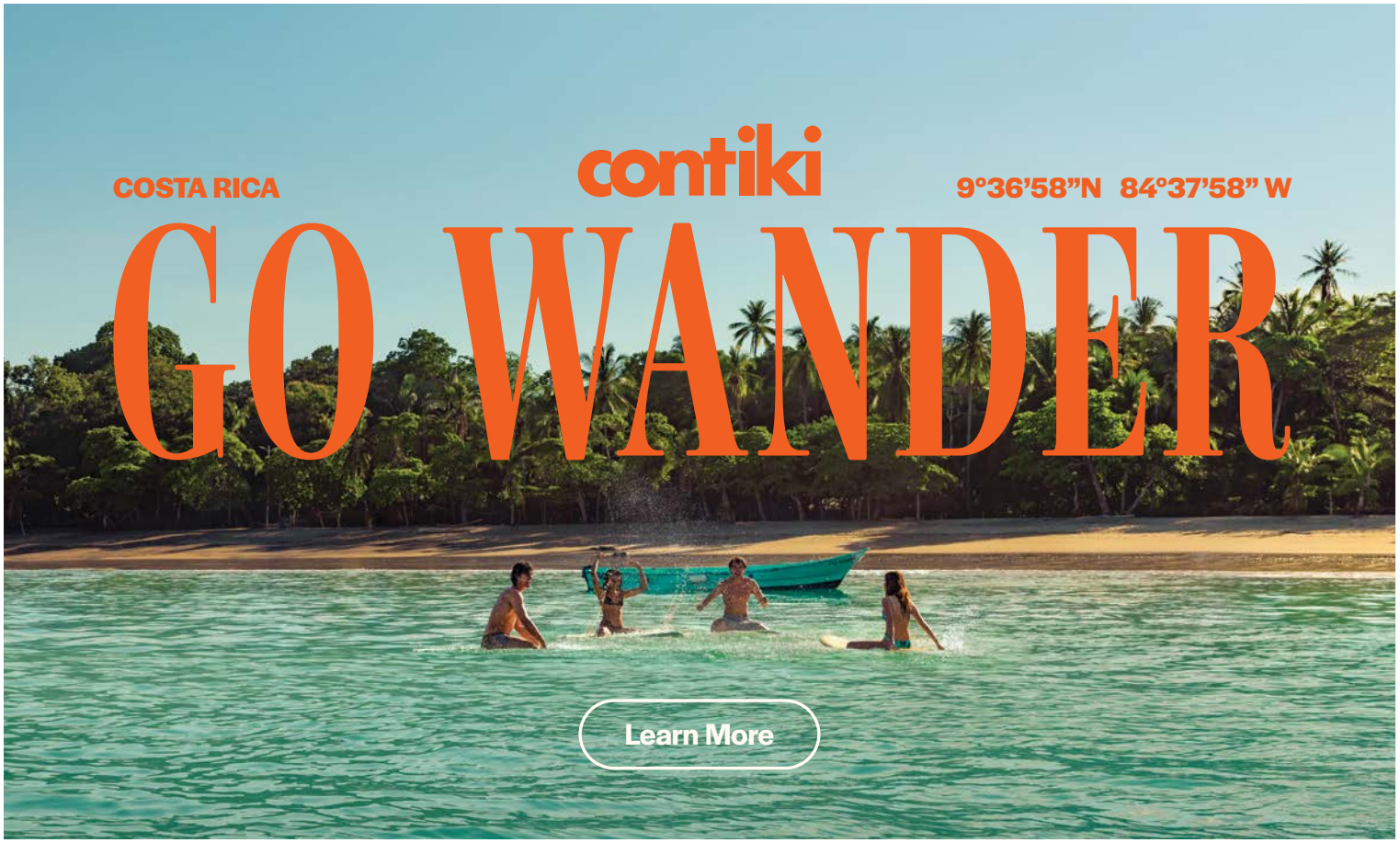
Nevada winners

TRAVEL Nevada has revealed the 24 winners of its Nevada Specialist Challenge (***TD*** 05 Aug 2026), including 12 Australians and three New Zealanders, as well as nine Canadians.

The group will experience the destination across six separate itineraries between 03-09 Dec, allowing them to build firsthand destination knowledge and strengthen their confidence in selling Nevada.

Aussie agents joining the famil trip include Stacey Martin, Destinations Designed - Envoyage; Ashley McGrath, Travel Utopia; Anna Powell, Travel Associates; Alex Mary Lee, Travel & Cruise North East; and Barry Warner, Planetdwellers.

Elyse Palmer, Kylie Ford and Georgina Grandi from TravelManagers, along with Abbey Shannon, Nathaniel Yuen, Bianca Venter and Natasha Walsh from Flight Centre, were also selected to participate. *JM*



TRAVELDAILY

Monday 2nd Nov 2026



Extra Tassie Spirit

SPIRIT of Tasmania's two newest vessels made their simultaneous debuts on Sat, as *Spirit of Tasmania IV* departed Geelong and *Spirit of Tasmania V* departed Devonport.

Each can carry an additional 470 passengers per sailing than the original *Spirit* ship, with both vessels featuring 301 cabins ranging from family, deluxe and accessible to pet-friendly accommodation options.

The ships also boast expanded storage for vehicles and freight.

Staple culinary options are present on both vessels, including the Tasmanian Market Kitchen, Mersey Cafe and Bar, Maatsuyker Bar and Cradle Lounge.

Tasmania's Premier Jeremy Rockliff said that the vessels mark "a new chapter for Tasmania".

"The inaugural sailings represent a significant investment in our state's future and the vital connection between Tasmania and [the] mainland," he said. *JB*

South India goes Down Under

KERALA Tourism has completed its Australian Roadshow, travelling to Brisbane, Sydney and Melbourne to provide industry professionals a series of destination updates and showcase what the south Indian region has to offer.

The roadshow focused on Kerala's beaches, backwaters, hill stations, wildlife, culture, cuisine and renowned Ayurveda treatments, with education



and advice relayed about how Australian travel agents can sell these experiences to their clients.

All three events featured a speed-dating session, where wholesalers and tour operators linked with Kerala tourism reps.

"Australia is an important market for Kerala, and this roadshow provided a valuable opportunity to connect directly with the travel professionals who inspire and plan their clients' journeys," said Anjana Muraleedharan, director of Kerala's Department of Tourism.

Each event also had three prize winners, all receiving a seven-night trip to Kerala. *JB*

HLO completes buy

HELLOWORLD Travel Limited finalised its 100% acquisition of Crown Currency Exchange on Fri (***TD*** 21 Sep 2026).

Emily Palermo and Greg Woolley will remain in their respective roles as CEO and chairman.

HLO CEO and MD Andrew Burnes said the buyout will allow the company to expand its service offering across ANZ. *JM*

Tassie tourists hurt

SIX people remain in hospital in Melbourne and Hobart following a serious minibus crash on King Island on Fri afternoon.

The Toyota HiAce, carrying 10 tourists aged in their mid-70s to 80s, rolled down an embankment on South Road in the south of the island after losing traction on loose gravel.

Police said several passengers sustained serious injuries, although none were believed to be life-threatening. *ZH*

DL completes wi-fi

DELTA Air Lines has completed the rollout of free global wi-fi across all APAC routes.

SkyMiles members travelling between Australia, NZ and LAX can now tap into the carriers expanding network, operated by tech partner T-Mobile.

Delta operates one of the world's largest connected fleets, at 1,300 wi-fi ready jets. *ZH*

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Window Seat

VISIT Iceland is taking a rather woolly approach to the AI revolution, encouraging workers to ditch their virtual assistants and instead send actual humans (with knitting needles) to attend an online meeting in their place.

The AI (Authentic Icelandic) Knittakers is a free bookable service, where a human Knittaker will attend online meetings on your behalf and summarise it all in a one-worded knitted summary in Icelandic wool.

Afterwards, the person who books the service will receive a photo of their Knittaker with the summary, as well as his/her story, name and location.

The launch comes after new research found that workers spend just under eight hours per month in meetings they consider unnecessary.

"With AI Knittakers, we are sharing a little of that Icelandic perspective with the world, and we hope it inspires people to step away from their screens and perhaps come and experience Iceland for themselves," the DMO said.



itravel brainiacs prevail



ITRAVEL took out the top prize at United Airlines' annual Brisbane trivia night, with three of its members walking away with two return tickets to the US along with accommodation.

Hosted by Belinda Condon, UA sales manager leisure, Australia, and the UA team at the Port Office Hotel, the evening marked a successful end to the Brisbane trip for itravel CEO Steve Labroski & national sales BDM Jo Howard.

The winners were Pamela Goldsbro from LUXE by itravel, as well as Mandi Forrester-Jones and Leica Marek from Viva Travel.

Prior to UA's trivia night, itravel's Southeast Queensland contingent met at CVFR's Brisbane office, where they listened to updates from itravel's head office, alongside Hawaiian Airlines, Club Med and Uniworld.

The updates were followed by lunch and a networking session at Riverland Brisbane.

"Spending time with our Queensland members is incredibly important to us," Labroski said.

"These catch-ups give us the opportunity to listen, share ideas and understand how we can continue to support them in their businesses," he added.

Howard added that the series of events were a strong reminder of the importance of bringing itravel members together in one place.

"It was great to spend the day with our Southeast Queensland members, connecting with each other and our supplier partners," said Howard.

"Having some of our members join us for the trivia night was a fantastic way to continue the fun, and did they bring their A-game."

According to itravel, Queensland is the second-largest member base for the business and networking events help to ensure stronger future results. *JB*

Modernising WEL

CONSTRUCTION is underway on a new domestic lounge upgrade at Wellington Airport.

Chief executive officer Matt Clarke said the updated area features more natural light, new seating and new bathrooms.

Some Jetstar flights will use the Southern end of the terminal. *ZH*

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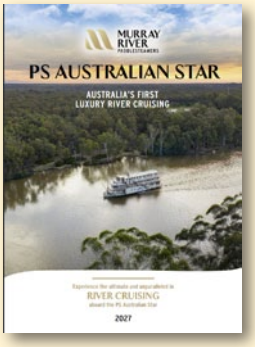
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APT - 2027/28 New Zealand collection

APT Luxury Travel has released its lineup of NZ adventures for 2027 and 2028. The upcoming season is highlighted by increased departures on some of APT's flagship itineraries, including the 20-day 'Essence of New Zealand' tour, exploring both the North and South Islands with a special stay in Mount Cook National Park and a cruise through Milford Sound. Also making its return is the 17-day 'New Zealand Wonderland' itinerary, now enhanced with an extended two-night stay at the Legacy Te Waonui Forest Retreat in Franz Josef. Also new in Franz Josef, guests can choose between a massage, a guided nature walk or a scenic cruise on Lake Mapourika. Read it **HERE**.



Murray River Paddlesteamers - *PS Australian Star* 2027

A new brochure has been released featuring brand-new imagery of the recently launched *PS Australian Star*, along with details of her three- to seven-night itineraries from Echuca. Within the pages, readers will find a comprehensive deck plan covering each stateroom option with maps and dimensions, plus details of the vessel's dining options, highlighted by the Hopwood Bar and Lounge, as well as the Randell Dining Room. For each voyage, the brochure details the day-by-day itinerary as well as a list of inclusions - read it **HERE**.



Globus - 2027 Europe and UK

The new brochure from Globus showcases its tours across Great Britain and Ireland, as well as mainland Europe. During the 2027 season, travellers can stay in unique accommodation, ranging from the Melia Costa del Sol in Spain, the Grand Hotel Vesuvio in Sorrento, Bluesun Hotel Elaphusa on the island of Brac, and the Dunkeld House Hotel in Blairgowrie, Scotland. For the 2027 season, guests who book a tour with Globus can save up to $1,000 per couple, as well as earn savings when booking two trips or more in the same calendar year. Agents and their clients can download the brochures **HERE**.

Sailing the spooky seas



CARNIVAL Cruise Line (CCL) recently hosted a Halloween event aboard *Carnival Encounter* in Brisbane, giving locals a glimpse of several spooky activations that have featured across its fleet over the past month.

Throughout the day, attendees took part in several Halloween-themed activities, including a trick-or-treat scavenger hunt and a *Thriller* dance class.

The event capitalised on the recent spike in popularity of Halloween in Australia, with data projecting a record spend of $530 million on the occasion.

"We are seeing growing demand for experiences that bring family and friends together in fun and memorable ways," said the cruise brand's assistant vice president Anton Loeb.

"Carnival Cruise Line is all about helping guests make memories they will talk about long after their holiday ends, which is why we love hosting our annual Halloween celebrations throughout the month of Oct on our ships that sail from Sydney and Brisbane all year."

Carnival's Halloween cruises from Sydney and Brisbane in 2027 and 2028 are now available to book. *JB*

Rotto appoints

THREE new members have been appointed to the Rottnest Island Authority Board, with Michelle Rhodes, Michael Gunner and Paula Rogers all joining on a three-year term.

Each of them brings extensive experience in environment and commercial management, while Gunner is also the former Chief Minister for the NT. *JB*

Feeling well at sea

TAUCK has announced new wellness-focused river cruises, with two departures in 2027 and five in 2028.

The inaugural voyages will set sail on 28 Jul and 11 Oct aboard *ms Serene*, combining sightseeing experiences on Tauck's 10-day 'Rendezvouz on the Seine' itinerary with a series of optional fitness, nutrition and mindfulness activities hosted by wellness coach Nikki Polos.

Prices for the 28 Jul sailing start from $11,390 per person. *JB*

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ADVERTISING & MARKETING
Head of Sales & Marketing - Sean Harrigan
Business Development Manager - Kara Stanley
advertising@traveldaily.com.au

GENERAL MANAGER & PUBLISHER
Matthew Vince

ACCOUNTS
accounts@traveldaily.com.au

Suite 1, Level 2, 64 Talavera Rd
Macquarie Park NSW 2113 Australia
Tel: 1300 799 220 (+61) 2 8007 6760

info@traveldaily.com.au

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