TRAVELDAILY
traveldaily.com.au
Tuesday 17th Nov 2026

Today's issue of *TD*

Travel Daily today features nine pages of news, including our **Sustainability** feature, and full pages from:

- **Cruise Lines International Association**
- **Viva Holidays**

UA flight delays

UNITED Airlines has resolved a technology issue that delayed flights today, with a network-wide outage causing major disruptions just days after the FAA grounded all flights (***TD*** 16 Nov).

While some flights were delayed, there was no impact on flights in progress or on United Express flights, the carrier said.

Sailing away soon

TIME is running out to nominate the best of the best at the 24th annual CLIA Awards.

See more on **page 10**.

It's a famil frenzy

VIVA Holidays has a range of exciting famils, designed to equip agents with first-hand knowledge.

See more on the **back page**.

Backpacker backflip

HOME affairs minister Tony Burke has wound back proposed changes to Australia's Working Holiday Maker visa laws today.

Speaking at a press conference, Burke said "working holiday makers had to be part of the solution" to bring net overseas migration down.

Following a number of stakeholder meetings and a delegation led by MP Matt Smith, Burke said an outcome will be delivered where "effectively two things are true" - net overseas migration numbers will drop and the regions will get more workers.

Under Burke's new policy, the Government will increase the regional work requirement for Working Holiday Makers seeking a second-year visa from 88 to 120 days for anyone who has not completed their specified work by 28 Feb 2027.

The six-month requirement for a third-year visa will remain unchanged while the existing ballot system will be replaced by the Regional Work Guarantee, allowing backpackers to apply from Dec, with guarantees issued monthly from Jan.

The Government will also increase the number of available third-year places from 5,000 to 25,000, while retaining its target of 45,000 second-year places.

"This is a massive win for the regions...we are getting extra workforce [and] it is going to give people the surety that they need going forward," Leichhardt MP Matt Smith said. *ZH*

Air T Rex concerns

REX parent Air T has listed the struggling Australian carrier several times as part of forward-looking risk assessments in its latest financial update.

The American Nasdaq-listed business said it held concerns that Rex's revenues and operating costs may be volatile or unpredictable, and that it may be unable to offset cost increases or revenue decreases through pricing, surcharges, cost reductions or other measures.

Air T also stated there was a risk that Rex may be unable to return all of its ageing Saab 340 twin-engine turboprop aircraft to service anticipated timelines, or retain regulated route contracts and protected slots.

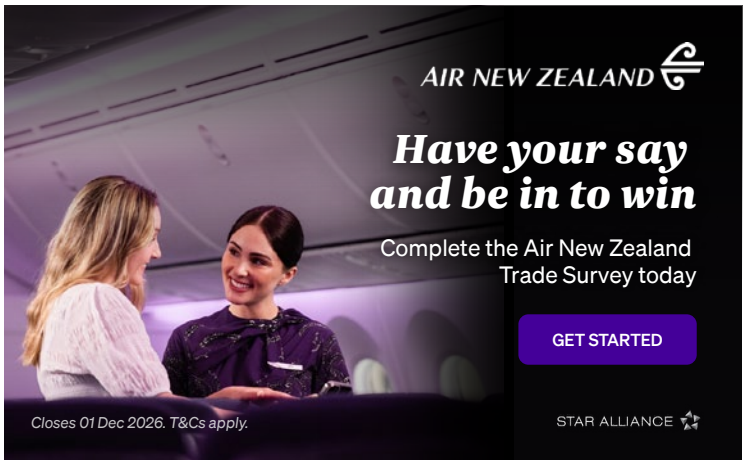
The litany of concerns were reported alongside an EBITDA loss of US$900,000 (A$1.34 million) for Rex during the Sep quarter, which Air T said was due to delays at engine overhaul shops and a doubling of fuel costs compared to pre-war levels.

Across all of its businesses, Air T reported an operating loss of US$11.8 million (A$17.5 million) for the quarter. *AB*

Trafalgar fams back

TRAFALGAR'S Tour Week will return in 2027 for its fourth year, with 13 immersive journeys across five continents up for grabs as part of the tour operator's famil program.

Tour Week will return in Mar, as Trafalgar aims to showcase its new era, with itineraries across its Premium, Classic and Saver tours, in addition to Contiki's new Go Wander range - **CLICK HERE** for more information. *JB*







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Powering up La Vie

LA VIE Hotels has appointed Powerhouse Communications to help raise its profile in the Australian market as the brand marks its 10th birthday.

The agency will focus on corporate reputation, media relations, executive profiling and thought leadership. *AB*

Trust now matters more

EXCLUSIVE

AUSTRALIAN Travel Industry Association CEO Dean Long has identified several challenges facing the industry next year, including changes in airline distribution and a rocky geopolitical landscape.

"Airline distribution keeps evolving, and it works best when airlines and advisers share a table," Long told ***Travel Daily.***

"Through ATMC, we have built a direct channel into Qantas via the NDC Advisory Committee, so travel management companies are helping shape the rollout rather than just reacting to it."

In an unpredictable world where crises can take place from week to week and the internet can be an unreliable source of truth, "trusted data and trusted businesses matter more than ever", Long added, pointing to the organisation's new suite of dashboards created for members.

In addition, operators should be aware that as the aviation ombudsman will be live next year, travellers will be aware of their rights and have even higher expectations, he said.

According to Long, attracting and retaining talent will continue to be a challenge for every part of the ecosystem, from agencies to airlines to suppliers.

Asked to look back on 2026, he described it as "busy, buoyant and a lot more connected than the headlines suggest".

"Whatever the world threw at us, Australians kept booking... what has changed is that the industry has become even more united," he reflected.



"Airlines, destinations, suppliers, advisers, regulators and government all found out this year how much easier life is when we pick up the phone to each other," he added.

Long referred to several milestones this year that demonstrated this collaboration, such as navigating the Middle East conflict and the work on the Fiji Tourism Tax, which "was a great example of everyone getting it right" (***TD*** 17 Sep).

He also pointed to the merging of ATIA and CATO, as well as the establishment of the new Independent Travel Agents Association (***TD*** 24 Aug).

"Everyone has a seat at the table with the full weight of one organisation behind them - that is what a united industry looks like," Long enthused. *JHM*

Jordanian fare hike

ROYAL Jordanian fares for travel from Melbourne and Sydney to Amman will increase on 17 Nov for travel from Dec.

In an advisory sent out to partners this morning, the Middle Eastern carrier did not disclose the reason for the increase, but it arrives amid high fuel prices.



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Vietnam surges for G Adv

EXCLUSIVE

G ADVENTURES has seen a shift to closer-to-home destinations amid the cost-of-living crunch, with bookings to Asia surging for the operator this year.

The company's managing director ANZ Sean Martin told ***Travel Daily*** that Aussies are increasingly turning to countries such as Thailand, India, Sri Lanka and China as alternatives to long-haul destinations.

Leading the pack for G Adventures at the moment however is Vietnam, an already bullish market for the company, which has grown by 30% over the last 12 months.

Martin also revealed that airfare prices are driving destination choice more than ever in the cost-conscious climate.

"People seem to be happy to sacrifice Europe for Asia, but not necessarily drop down to a less comfortable trip style," he said.



The operator's local head also said that booking lead-in times have decreased this year.

"Some of this may also be due to the Iran uncertainty impacting destinations like Europe and the Middle East being booked closer to departure," Martin said.

When asked what provides him with cause for optimism for travel in 2027, Martin said there were plenty of reasons to be bullish about the future of travel.

"Visit the international arrivals area at Sydney airports for example and you will see there is plenty of cause for optimism.

"People are still travelling, they are just changing where they travel to, not how.

"If operators respond to this shift in demand, there are plenty of reasons [for confidence]." *AB*

PER transport hub

PERTH Airport's P1 transport hub is set to open tomorrow, becoming the main access point for Terminal 1.

The hub will replace the forecourt road and the T1 Short Term Car Park.

From the hub's opening, all Terminal 1 pick-up and drop-off will move to the Ground Level of P1, accessed via Airport Drive. *MS*

Heritage crash cause

A STEERING problem has been revealed as the cause behind American Cruise Lines paddlewheel cruise ship American Heritage being struck by an asphalt tanker on the Mississippi River in New Orleans over the weekend (***TD*** 16 Nov).

American Heritage had 190 people on board when the incident occurred.

The incident remains under investigation by the US National Transportation Safety Board. *JB*

QF sticks by DJs

DAVID Jones will still remain a Qantas loyalty partner, despite the department store's ajor ongoing financial woes.

Travel Daily understands that Qantas Frequent Flyer members will continue to be able to use points at David Jones locations.

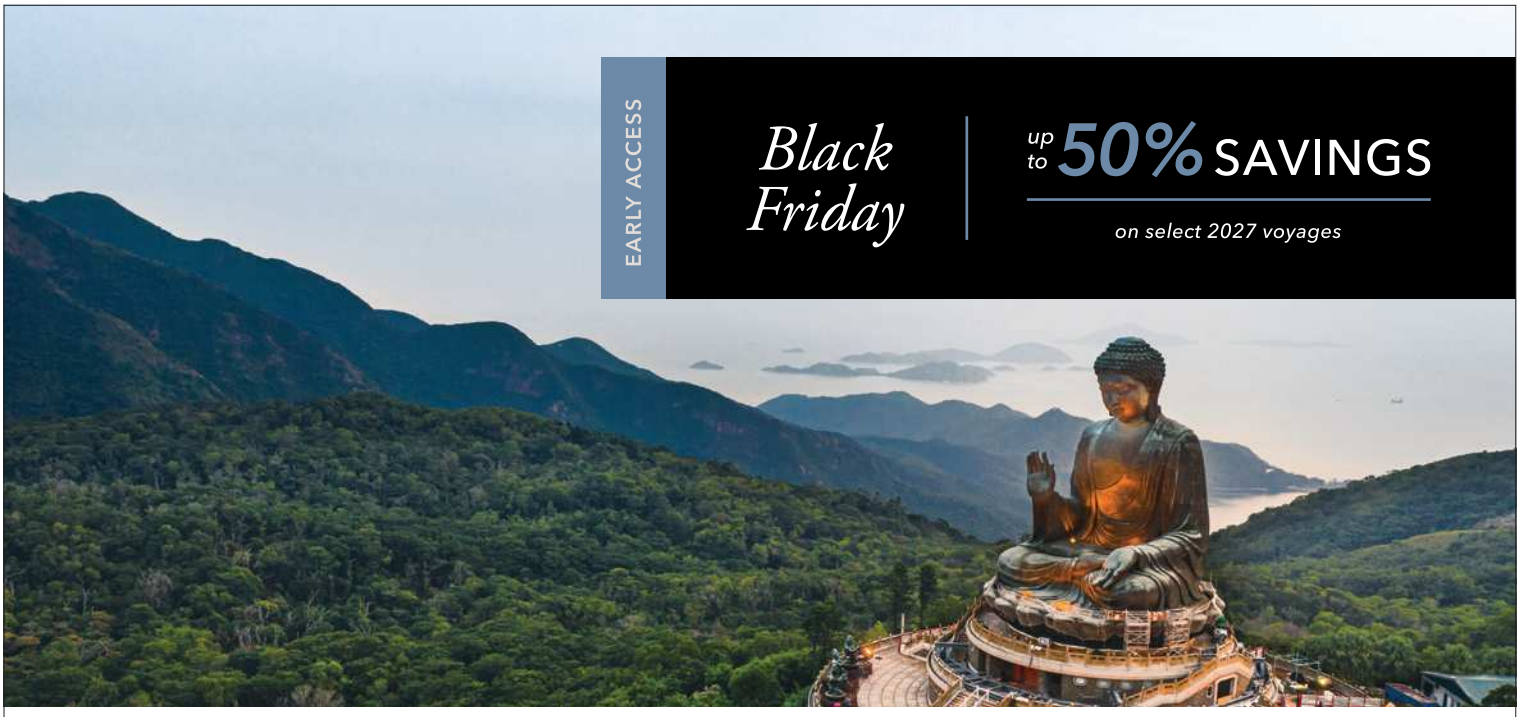
David Jones recently announced that it will shut 19 of its stores nationwide after going into voluntary administration. *JB*

SYD cancellations

TRAVELLERS have been facing delays and cancellations at Sydney Airport due to cloud and wind activity, with more than 100 flights being affected in the past 24 hours.

Services both to and from Sydney were affected, with the bulk of cancellations affecting domestic routes.

Airservices Australia recommended passengers check with their airline for updates. *MS*



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Travel sector off track on accessibility

EXCLUSIVE

TRAVEL executives around the world are underestimating the opportunity to offer accessible experiences and overestimating how well they are serving the customer base, believes industry expert John Sage, founder of Accessible Travel Solutions.

"They think that 'well, only 2% of the rooms in my hotel are accessible, so that's just 2% of the [potential] market', but that's not the case," he told ***Travel Daily***.

"Two percent of the rooms may be mobility accessible, but people with low vision, hearing [issues] or who are neurodivergent can stay anywhere in a hotel."

Sage was also highly critical of the dearth of marketing aimed at travellers with accessibility needs.

"I have yet to see any brand in travel promote their accessibility - no hotel chain, no destination, no cruise line, no airport, no airline - nobody is really marketing to this



demographic," he emphasised.

If operators were to offer suitable experiences for this market, they would be more likely to win more long-term business, especially as they often travel with their families, he said.

"They spend 30% more than the general population…and they tend to be loyal, so if they book with Railbookers and they have a positive experience, they will come back - they're not going to try something else [on a whim]," said Sage, a wheelchair user.

Sage is working with Railbookers to create accessible itineraries to Italy, Paris and the Netherlands.

Rail travel is particularly disability friendly, thanks to its dedicated lounges, spacious onboard bathrooms and great service, he said.

"It's just an entirely different experience…I would rather do rail travel than any first-class air travel," said Sage, who also leads the Global Accessible Travel Alliance, which officially launched at the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) summit in Nov.

Founding members include the WTTC and several other international organisations.

The aim of the new collective is to encourage consistency across accessible travel experiences around the world.

"It is to promote alignment, to promote awareness, and do some creative things to show that accessibility is an irresistible investment," Sage explained.

"When done right, it is extremely profitable," he added. *JHM*

Air NZ ups Houston

AIR New Zealand will add a sixth weekly service between Auckland and Houston from 28 Sep to 30 Oct 2027.

The additional Tuesday flight will be operated by Boeing 777-300ER aircraft. *ZH*

A points revolution

VIRGIN Australia's Velocity Frequent Flyer program has partnered with Revolut Bank to give Australians more travel rewards from everyday spending.

Revolut Bank customers are now able to convert RevPoints earned through eligible card purchases into Velocity points at a 1:1 transfer rate.

Additionally, Revolut Bank will launch a co-branded debit card with Velocity, allowing customers to earn Velocity Points directly from everyday debit spending for the first time.

A bonus points offer is on now to celebrate the collaboration. *JM*



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Inspiring increases

INSPIRING Vacations has reported growth in Australian passenger numbers in both Egypt and China, as well as announcing a range of new products in time for Black Friday.

Passenger numbers from Australia to Egypt have grown 76% YoY, with the company finding seven out of 10 bookings include a second country such as Jordan or Tunisia.

Numbers to China have risen even higher by 99%, which has led to Inspiring Vacations introducing the 19-day 'China Uncovered with Yangtze River and Tianmen Mountains' tour, which combines the Forbidden City, Terracotta Warriors, Zhangjiajie and Fenghuang.

Other new tours include the 22-day 'Five Stans Unveiled' itinerary from $7,695, the 16-day 'Highlights of South America' tour from $6,995 and the 15-day 'Sri Lanka Uncovered and The Maldives' from $4,495. *JB*

New road for EU car hire

EUROPEAN Drive Co has officially launched, offering a new specialist in European car leasing for the Australian market.

The business, founded by Nathan Baber, has been built to directly support travel agents and their clients.

"I'm genuinely excited to launch European Drive Co.," Baber (**pictured**) said.

"I've seen first-hand what a great European car lease does for a client's holiday, and European Drive Co was created to help agents deliver exactly that."

With the sole business focus squarely placed on European car leasing alone, Baber and his team bring over 20 years of travel agent partnerships and experience to the table.

European Drive Co. will work exclusively with CAR-2-EUROPE, offering brand new Peugeot, Citroën and DS vehicles with zero excess across 33 countries.



All support is local, provided by an Australian-based support team with agents to receive fast, clear quotes in AUD, with every booking managed from start to finish.

"We're a specialist team based right here in Australia, all of our support is local, and agents can expect fast quotes, a team that picks up the phone, and expert support on every booking," Baber continued, adding that he is proud to be working with brands that agents know and trust.

A 2027 earlybird offer is now open, with savings on bookings made by 15 January 2027. *ZH*

More Samoa for QF

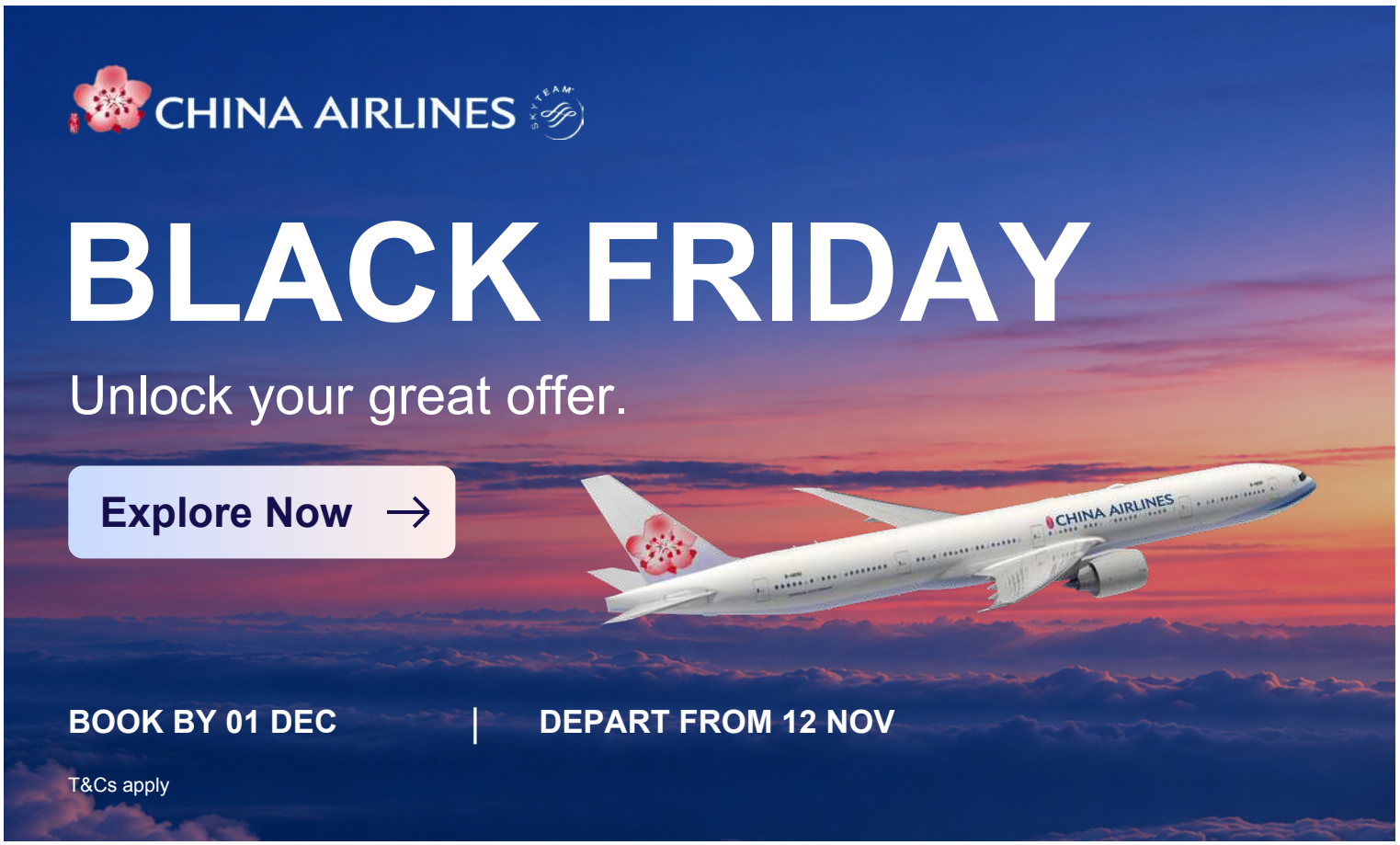
QANTAS has secured an allocation of 132 passenger seats per week on the Australia-Samoa route for the next five years, following a determination by the International Air Services Commission (IASC).

The determination grants Qantas the capacity for five years and follows similar capacity deals for the carrier in South Africa and PNG (***TD*** 29 Oct 2026).

From 19 Dec 2026, Qantas plans to operate an additional weekly return service between Australia and Apia, Samoa, until the end of Jan 2027, using Boeing 737-800 aircraft configured with 168 seats.

Qantas currently operates six flights a week across Brisbane-Apia services and three Sydney-Auckland–Apia services. *ZH*





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DFAT: look out for scams

SMARTRAVELLER has urged Australians heading overseas to remain alert to travel scams, with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) warning travellers to 'stop, check and protect' themselves before travel.

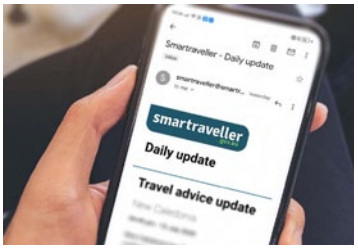
The Smartraveller campaign encourages holidaymakers to verify travel providers, accommodation listings and booking websites before handing over money or exchanging personal information.

"Scammers are getting better at making their scams look legitimate," the website read.

"They may pretend to be an airline, airport, accommodation provider, travel business or government agency.

"To do this, they use fake websites, emails, text messages and social media accounts. "

The update comes as new data showed that in 2025, Australians made more than 481,000 scam



reports and reported losing more than $2.18 billion.

Before booking or travelling, Australians are advised to use official websites and trusted providers, independently verify booking changes and payment requests, and carefully check websites before entering personal or payment details.

Smartraveller also said travellers should question deals that appear too good to be true and check visa and entry requirements through official sources. *ZH*

Approaching more

EXPEDITION company Explora (not affiliated with Explora Journeys) has partnered with Approach Guides, providing advisors with co-branded marketing content and personalised web pages for its itineraries and lodges.

The company has properties in destinations such as Patagonia, the Atacama Desert and Rapa Nui (Easter Island). *JB*

Uniquely S America

THE Unique Tourism Collection has been chosen to represent South America Incoming in the Australian and NZ market.

South America Incoming provides destination management services for countries such as Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Peru and Uruguay, in addition to Patagonia and Antarctica.

Through this single point of contact, advisors can book leisure, luxury and MICE travel, backed up by local expertise and on-ground support. *JB*

Dusit goes double

DUSIT Hotels and Resorts has opened two properties in Yangon, Myanmar, both offering guests the group's classic Thai charm.

First opened in 1901, The Strand Hotel Yangon has been rebranded under the Dusit Collection, featuring 32 suites which still keep to the property's historical architecture, in addition to 24-hour butler service.

Guests can enjoy Burmese fine dining at The Strand Restaurant, accommodating 45 guests at a time, with a private room for 10.

For events, organisers can choose between the 760m^2 Strand Hall, catering for up to 720 guests, or The Strand Garden for more intimate settings.

In contrast, ASAI Yangon Sule offers a more contemporary lifestyle experience across its 85 guest rooms ranging from 15 to 30m^2, as well as Babette Eatery & Bar serving Western cuisine. *JB*

Museum makes way

THE green light has been given to build a new state-of-the-art museum in India's capital New Delhi, showcasing the country's history and culture.

First proposed in 2023, Yuge Yugeen Bharat Museum will span 178,509m^2, occupying the land once held by the former civil service offices.

The first gallery is set to open by the end of next year, with the full project earmarked for completion by 2030-31. *JB*

RBG's Swiss summit

RAILBOOKERS Group has announced that its next global summit will take place in Interlaken, Switzerland next year.

The organisation's fourth annual conference recently wrapped up in Vancouver, featuring presentations from CEO and president Frank Marini and SVP Andrew Channell, as well as World Travel and Tourism Council CEO Gloria Guevara, Amtrak's head of business strategy Jakob Clark, and Leading Trains of the World group COO Giulia Bandini.

It followed a record year for the company, which saw a 25% increase in its overall business.

New island licences

VISITORS to the Cook Islands can now apply for their local driver's licence online before arrival, following the launch of a new digital service by the Cook Islands Police Service.

The system, launched with support from the United Nations Capital Development Fund, allows travellers to complete theory tests online and pre-book their practical driving tests.

Applications should be submitted at least 48 hours before arrival to ensure their licences are ready for collection.

The theory and practical driving tests each cost about A$8, while the licence itself costs A$16.

Previously, visitors were required to complete all stages in person upon arrival. *ZH*

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Viva la Canada



VIVA Holidays, in partnership with Destination British Columbia (BC) and Air Canada recently took a group of Australian travel advisors on a six-day famil to the Canadian province, covering Vancouver, Whistler and Victoria.

During the six days, the advisors gained some key insights into the region, experiencing the vibrancy of Vancouver, the alpine landscape of Whistler, and the coastal charm of Victoria, all the while being supported by the local destination management companies in each area.

Katarnya Ferguson from Helloworld Travel AYR called the famil "an invaluable experience", providing her with a deeper understanding of BC.

"The opportunity to connect with local tourism partners and experience Canada firsthand has strengthened our destination knowledge and equipped us with greater confidence to inspire and inform travellers," she said.

Other agents highlighted the famil's jam-packed itinerary, covering different segments of BC which can be sold to several kinds of travellers.

"The famil to Victoria, Vancouver and Whistler was fantastic," said Jackie Simkin from Helloworld Travel Geraldton.

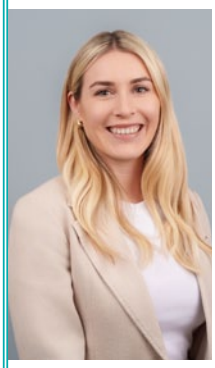
"An action-packed trip that left very few stones unturned, giving us a great insight into what these destinations have to offer.

"I've come away with lots of ideas and inspiration to share with my clients and a greater confidence in selling Canada."

The famil reinforced Viva Holidays' commitment to providing advisors with destination experiences to bolster recommendations for clients, as well as highlighting Canada's year-round appeal. *JB*

ATIA UPDATE

from Ingrid Fraser, Director of Public Policy & Advocacy



IT IS a little early for an end-of-year wrap-up, but as this is my last ***Travel Daily*** column for 2026, I thought we'd take a brief trip into an alternative 2027.

It is Mon morning, you've booked a client's trip but must wait four days before offering them travel insurance.

There's a $14,000 bill for joining the compulsory aviation ombuds scheme, with another $8,000 required annually.

A client wants to know why their Fiji holiday, booked months ago, suddenly costs more, while the Maldives government is taking 17% of your margin on the holiday you've just sold.

Not exactly the start of the year you would choose.

Thankfully, we can return to the real world.

Travel businesses can continue offering insurance at the time of booking, after ATIA secured an extension of the rules allowing this through to Oct 2031.

We have also secured travel agents' exclusion from the proposed Aviation Consumer Ombuds Scheme, and confirmation that Fiji's new tourism tax won't apply to existing bookings.

In the Maldives, coordinated international advocacy has prompted the government to move to repeal the 17% tourism GST requirements for overseas travel businesses.

Of course, some decisions don't go our way.

The Reserve Bank of Australia's surcharging ban went ahead, but our engagement continues.

Last week, we met with government alongside interested members to explain the impact on travel businesses.

We are not expecting a reversal, but we will continue raising these concerns with government and the RBA as further payments reforms are considered.

Some of our work is also about the industry we want to build: more competitive aviation, stronger pathways into travel careers and easier trips through Aussie airports.

Across 125 political meetings and 138 meetings with government departments so far this year, the aim has been the same: make sure the realities of running a travel business are considered when decisions are made.

The imaginary 2027 can stay where it belongs.

With two parliamentary sitting weeks still ahead, we're working to make the real one even better.

The club is *now* open

Gift a client or yourself a membership for your chance to win a luxury Hayman Island escape

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ECOTOURISM AUSTRALIA LIFTS THE BAR

OPERATORS certified under Ecotourism Australia are continuing to exceed the Oceania regional average for guest satisfaction, according to the body's *ReviewPro 2025–2026 Customer Satisfaction KPI Benchmarking Report*.

The report revealed that Ecotourism Australia's certification achieved an average Global Review Index (GRI) score of 88.8% for FY26, compared to the Oceania average of 84.2%.

Using ReviewPro's guest intelligence system, the report drew upon guest reviews from over 175 travel agencies, covering 361,912 guest reviews, up more than 15% from FY25.

In more than half of the reviews, sustainability was mentioned, with many highlighting a property or operator's eco-friendliness as well as its management of water and plastics.



Booking.com was the leading source for reviews (46%), followed by Google (30%) and Expedia (8%).

Ecotourism Australia CEO Elissa Keenan found it pleasing to see its certified operators receive such positive feedback.

"Guest feedback is both an important measure of how visitors experience a tourism experience, but also strongly influences travellers' decisions when planning their holidays," Keenan said.

"These results show that Ecotourism Australia's certified operators are delivering experiences valued by guests, while demonstrating a commitment to independently verified sustainability practices and global best practice." *JB*

India's tiger tales

MANAS Tiger Reserve in the Indian state of Assam has been identified as the fastest growing tiger reserve in the country, according to research from luxury holiday provider Pettitts Travel.

Tiger numbers in the reserve are forecasted to rise by 845% from 2014 to 2030, with its tiger density set to jump by 641% during the same period. *JB*

Avani Queenstown shows some love

AVANI Queenstown has become a Love Queenstown Impact Partner, and is set to provide financial support towards grassroots climate conservation and biodiversity projects around Lake Whakatipu.

Being a Love Queenstown Impact Partner, the property will commit either 1% of net profits or at least $100,000 to the cause annually.

Contributions from partners are pooled, with 80% of the funds going toward immediate environmental action, while 20% goes into an endowment fund for future generations.

As part of Minor Hotels, the initiative builds on the hotel group's global sustainability efforts, ranging from coral restoration in the Maldives, sea turtle conservation in Sri Lanka and supporting wildlife protection in Cambodia. *JB*

Sustained travel

THE 1,000 Mile Travel Group recently held its Australian Top Achievers trip to Indonesia, aimed at showcasing how luxury properties are utilising sustainable practices.

Taking place from 26-31 Oct, the trip saw the agents stay at Desa Potato Head Bali and Cap Karoso on the island of Sumba, with both properties championing regenerative agriculture and community-focused tourism.

The agents took part in Desa Potato Head Bali's Follow the Waste Tour, providing a behind-the-scenes look at how 0.5% of the resort's waste is sent to landfill, as well as Cap Karoso's regenerative farm, which grows produce for the hotel's dining venues.

The Top Achievers program recognises independent advisors who are outstanding in both operations and sales. *JB*

Pictured: Nick Anderson, Kurt Hufer, Stephanie McDonald Erin Price, Sam Rowe and Emily Davidson.





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MONEY

WELCOME to Money, *TD*'s Tue feature on what the Australian dollar is doing.

AU$1 = US$0.673

THE Australian dollar has slumped to almost its lowest level of the year, buying just over US$0.67 this morning.

Jitters in the AI sector abroad have extended into the Aussie market, Commonwealth Bank international economist Samara Hammoud told *Nine*.

The Jensen Huang spying scandal, as well as concerns about the AI boom following underwhelming yearly results have dragged the AUD lower than $0.68 for the first time since Jan, she explained.

"The Australian dollar is increasingly exposed to the AI cycle through both its traditional sensitivity to global risk sentiment and the growing importance of data-centre investment to the Australian growth outlook," she said.

America's midterm election results have also dented confidence in AI, with the Republicans, broadly supportive of the sector, handed a resounding defeat.

Wholesale rates this morning.

US	$0.673
UK	£0.511
NZ	$1.225
Euro	€0.612
Japan	¥107.4
Thailand	ß22.83
China	¥4.448
South Africa	11.43
Canada	$0.963
Bitcoin	A$0.000010

There is more to discover in India

OPINION

Nupur Khurana is the AU/NZ representative for QXP India Travel.



Travel + Leisure has just named India its Destination of the Year for 2027. For Australian advisors, it is a good reason to reconnect with clients who have already been.

You know the client: they have seen Delhi, Agra and Jaipur, taken their Taj Mahal photo, and feel they have done India.

The way back in is a simple question: what did they love about the first trip?

If it was Rajasthan's architecture and crafts, suggest Gujarat. Rani ki Vav at Patan, an 11th-century stepwell listed by UNESCO, descends seven levels lined with sculptures.

In Kutch, visits can be built around the embroidery and block printing. For wildlife lovers, Gir is home to the world's only wild Asiatic lions.

If it was the safari, consider Madhya Pradesh, which *Travel + Leisure* highlights for its tigers and temples. For clients ready to go beyond jeep drives, Satpura is the only national park in India that allows guided walks through its core forest.

If it was Varanasi's sense of ritual, look to Odisha, connecting Bhubaneswar, Konark's 13th-century Sun Temple and Puri.

Puri's annual Rath Yatra, is one of the oldest and largest Hindu chariot festivals, with three wooden chariots built afresh each year by hereditary craftspeople.

If it was the people and their living traditions, go east to Nagaland. In early Dec, the Hornbill Festival brings the Naga tribes together at Kisama Heritage Village near Kohima for warrior dances, tribal music, crafts and food.

If it was food and historic houses, try Chettinad in Tamil Nadu. Between 1850 and the end of the Second World War, local merchants built more than 10,000 mansions, fitting them with Burmese teak, Italian marble and tiles from Japan and England.

> "Repeat travellers tend to remember the service and the staff who know how they take their tea by the second morning."

Indian hotels alone make a strong case for returning. *Travel + Leisure*'s editor, Jacqui Gifford, calls India home to some of the most spectacular hospitality experiences anywhere.

The range runs from The Oberoi Rajgarh Palace, a 350-year-old fortress-palace near Panna's tigers to The Sen in Uttarakhand, with just four suites. In between are heritage homes run by the families who built them, jungle lodges and grand city hotels.

Repeat travellers tend to remember the service and the staff who know how they take their tea by the second morning.

India's Destination of the Year award will bring in first-timers but clients who have already been just need an agent to ask the question.

Window Seat

QUESTIONS are swirling about Donald Trump's new Air Force One gifted to him by Qatar's government, as he prepares to fly aboard the jet on his whistle-stop diplomatic and economic tour to Asia.

Trump has been saying the jet would be "going away" to get "maxed out" so it could "go into any territory" after he was forced to fly home from Turkey on a secret military plane in Jul (***TD*** 09 Jul).

The changes were set to take "about 60 days", according to Trump; however he has been using it seemingly without any significant interruption across the last month, meaning it has not been out of commission for any extended period.

Air Force One has received some improvements and periodic maintenance since then, but it is unclear whether it has been fully "maxed out," a White House official told *NBC News*.

A longer upgrade period is expected in the future, according to White House officials, but those upgrades will not take a full 60 days.

The jet is a Boeing VC-25B Bridge, a military conversion of a single Boeing 747-8, and was originally gifted to Trump to complement the American Air Force's ageing VC-25A fleet.



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