TRAVELDAILY

Wednesday 18th Nov 2026



Sail close to home

PONANT Explorations has savings on several voyages during the holiday season, in addition to a reduced 10% deposit.

This offer ends 04 Jan 2027.

See more on **page eight**.

A river of savings

WITH Emerald Cruises, travellers can save an extra $500pp on river sailings across France and Portugal.

See more on **page nine**.

$81b in tourism pipeline

AUSTRALIA'S tourism investment pipeline has reached a record $81.1 billion, with key projects in aviation, accommodation and visitor experiences set to boost the capacity to attract international and domestic travellers.

The latest Tourism Investment Monitor released by Tourism Research Australia shows the pipeline has grown $13.6b (20%) since Jun 2025 and $24.7b (44%) in the last two years.

"Tourism is the lifeblood of Australia and the latest investment figures show that there is more opportunity on the horizon as industry continues to develop new and exciting projects," Federal Minister for Trade & Tourism Don Farrell said.



Accommodation makes up $15b of proposed investment, with projects expected to deliver around 57,400 new rooms.

14,200 rooms have been earmarked for regional areas to help foster more opportunities for operators and sellers.

Aviation represents a further $24.4 billion in investment with key developments at WSI and Adelaide Airport's integrated upgrade plan.

The figures come as international visitor spending increased 16% to $40.5 billion in the year to June 2026. *ZH*

Today's issue of TD

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

- **Ponant Explorations**
- **Scenic**
- **Entire Travel Group**

Take on Tahiti

WITH Entire Travel Group, agents can secure a range of packages to French Polynesia.

See more on the **back page**.

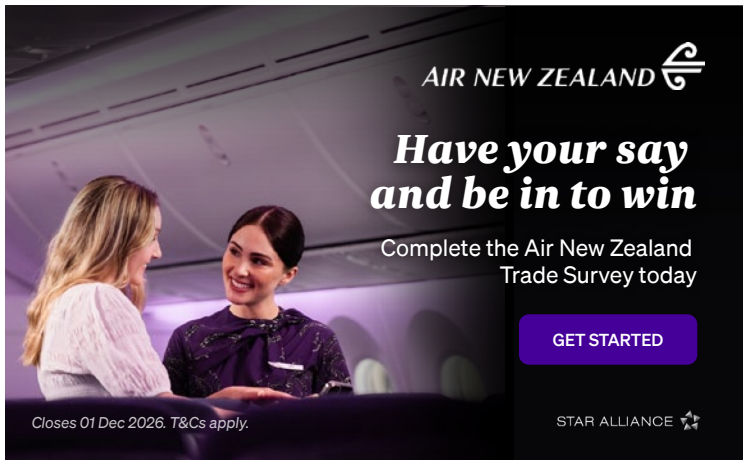
A Resilient glow-up

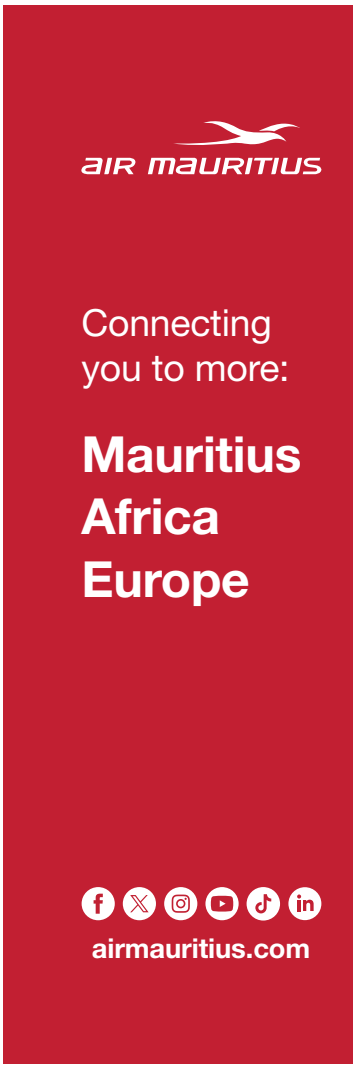
VIRGIN Voyages' *Resilient Lady* will receive a glow-up next year, with the refreshed experience to debut on 02 Sep.

One of the headline additions will be Yim, a new Thai dining experience, and the first of its kind in the Virgin fleet.

The cruise line will also give loyalty passengers a new place to call their own aboard *Resilient*: 'The London Club' - head to today's ***CW*** for more. *MS*









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RBA reforms kick Webjet while down

THE full-year financial performance for Webjet Group will be challenged by the recent RBA changes implemented on 01 Oct, the latest reporting from the company has showed.

While the six months to 30 Sep saw the Aussie business suffer a significant profit drop (***TD*** breaking news), any turnaround will have to overcome an expected $4 million impact created by the mandatory removal of credit & debit charges.

The travel industry has been vocal about how the controversial payment reforms would impact the bottom line of businesses, with ATIA chief executive officer Dean Long adamant the RBA made the decision based on flawed data from the payment system board (***TD*** 09 Oct 2026).

However, Webjet Group CEO Nicole Sheffield made no excuses for Webjet's current financial predicament, placing the blame



for its poor H1 showing on a mix of internal mistakes amid a challenging external market.

"Our own execution has contributed to this result," Sheffield conceded.

"We have not been sufficiently competitive in our customer proposition, our digital experience has underdelivered, and our operating model has become too complex and costly."

To right the ship, Webjet plans to slash $10 million from its cost base by streamlining its operating model, better leverage customer data to drive conversion and yield, as well as refine the overall digital experience.

Webjet also provided more details about its touring push (***TD*** 13 Oct 2025), introducing Webjet Tours as part of its partner-led entry into the packaging segment.

Launching later this month, the tours are using a capital-light approach through an established partner to offer experiences initially in China, Japan, Canada and Alaska, Vietnam, Cambodia, India and Sri Lanka.

Other areas of focus will include growing its Cars and Motorhomes division and investing more in Webjet Business Travel.

Webjet Group has delivered a disappointing H127 result, with statutory net profit after tax dropping from a $6.2 million profit in the previous period to a $2.7 million loss.

Bookings were also down 4% to 697,000, revenue fell away by 12% to $60 million and TTV remained virtually unchanged at $727 million. *AB*

Starlux opens SYD

STARLUX Airlines has launched bookings for its Taipei-Sydney-Auckland service, kicking off 24 Mar 2027 (***TD*** 21 Sep 2026).

The service will run four times a week on Mon, Wed, Fri and Sat, operated with an Airbus A330-900neo, with the carrier confirming that it will increase services in May.

The route will allow travellers from Sydney and Auckland to connect to other destinations via Taipei, including several cities across Japan, US ports such as Los Angeles, San Francisco, Seattle, Ontario (California) and Phoenix, as well as Prague.

Starlux loyalty members travelling on the new route between 24 Mar and 30 Apr 2027 will also be eligible to receive bonus COSMILE miles, earning an extra 5,000 miles per sector on Sydney-Taipei and 1,500 miles per sector on Sydney-Auckland.

Starlux launched in 2020 and serves 34 global ports. *JB*



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Veltman at Adamaz

CO-FOUNDER of 1,000 Mile Travel Group Nicola Veltman, has been appointed CEO for the Americas at Adamaz Travel, the company founded by her husband Ben Ross.

Launching last year, Adamaz Travel is an acquisition group, purchasing established travel agencies and providing them with exclusive global rates on flights, accommodation and vehicles.

The appointment of Veltman comes off the back of co-founders Ross and Greg McCarthy's intention to expand globally (***TD*** 04 Jul 2025).

After starting her career at Flight Centre, Veltman launched 1,000 MTG back in 2015, with the goal of assisting seasoned agents run an independent business, she announced her departure earlier this year. (***TD*** 05 Nov 2026).

Today, the company has over 500 independent advisors in its networks across Australia, North America and the UK. *JB*

Lombok the rising star of Indonesia

EXCLUSIVE

LOMBOK is entering the next phase of its tourism development, gradually becoming a mainstream holiday destination for all, Samara Lombok developer Steve Ebsworth said.

Speaking with ***TD***, the man behind the upcoming Samara Lombok (***TD*** 20 Jul 2026) said the Indonesian government will invest around $3 billion into the island's tourism development, distributing inbound numbers away from Bali.

"The airport's only 30 minutes away [from Samara Lombok], the roads have been built for approximately 30 years forward, so they're oversized [and] the airport could handle more than triple the amount of passengers than what it's currently handling," Ebsworth said.

"It's all been built.

"The government finances tourism because they know it's a good return on investment.



"One million tourists equal 100,000 new jobs, or thereabouts," he continued.

Ebsworth said the biggest issue Lombok tourism faces comes in the way of air connectivity in the APAC region.

"[In terms of] direct flights, you have Singapore and KL (Kuala Lumpur)," Ebsworth said.

"Quite recently, we had four direct flights a week from Singapore, now we have 10, and it used to be seven return flights a week from KL, now we have 20.

"The government is taking new routes incredibly seriously.

"Perth and Darwin [have]signed MOUs with those airports and they're reducing taxes and being incredibly proactive.

"Australia will likely become one of the largest markets into Lombok over time because of its proximity and because there are direct flights being discussed."

Ebsworth's business partner, Erik Barreto, added that Lombok has gained luxury appeal due to its distinction from Bali.

"A lot of people go to Bali today, and they're expecting certain space, authenticity, island life," he said.

"When they get there, it's heavily urbanised, there's traffic and construction.

"What people are looking for now is space, they're looking for privacy, they're looking for nature, they're looking for beaches - Lombok offers all of that," he added. *JB*

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WWT takes on America

WENDY Wu Tours (WWT) has announced the launch of North American itineraries, with 10 new group tours available to book from 26 Nov.

The new lineup of itineraries will include the 'Jewels of Western Canada', the 'Winter Treasures' itinerary and the 'Spirit of the Deep South' tour.

According to the WWT's annual *The Journey Ahead Report -Travel's Next Chapter*, 71% of Aussies have expressed a desire to travel to either Canada or the US, with 47% including Canada as a top three bucket list destination.

"North America offers an incredible opportunity to challenge how Australians think about the region as a holiday destination," said WWT managing director Simon Bell.

"There's so much more to discover beyond the major cities and familiar landmarks, and we want to help travellers see the region through a different lens and discover what makes it worth exploring more deeply."



Additionally, WWT recorded a 38% YoY increase in solo bookings, reflecting the growing desire for those to explore a destination independently.

Despite this, the report also found 73% of solo travellers would prefer some form of human connection and 75% prioritise practical support during their trip. *JB*

Pictured: Amanda Bruno, head of marketing; Sonia Orrego, head of product; and Simon Bell.

Dutch spice trade

HOLLAND America Line (HAL) has announced the launch of the 27-day 'Coffee, Tea & Spice Legendary Voyage' aboard *Eurodam*, showcasing the flavours of Asia.

Departing from Singapore on 03 Jan 2029, the roundtrip voyage calls at 13 unique ports across seven countries including Indonesia, Brunei, Malaysia, the Philippines, Taiwan, Japan, Hong Kong and Vietnam.

There are also overnight stays in Bali, Hong Kong and Phu My.

During each port of call, guests will be able to learn the history of its flavours, see live demonstrations of the coffee and tea being produced as well as enjoy tasting sessions.

The voyage has been curated in conjunction with Art of Tea and Beukenhorst, producer of HAL's 1873 coffee, which offers unique tea and coffee blends onboard.

Bookings for the trip are set to open later this week. *JB*

HKTB incentive

THE Hong Kong Tourism Board has launched a new trade incentive for Australian and New Zealand agents, with a family trip to the semi-autonomous region on offer.

Running until 28 Feb 2027, agents can go in the running through selling eligible Hong Kong Airlines flights and hotel stays at Hong Kong Disneyland, with points earned for each booking.

Details can be found **HERE**. *JB*

Ski with the Norse

NORWEGIAN Wonders has launched three new ski holidays for the 2027/28 season.

Across the eight-day packages, travellers can choose between trips to Narvik, Voss and Hafjell, with each package including a lift-pass, local ski transfers, accommodation and a range of cultural experiences.

Packages start from $3,200 per person twin share. *JB*

COMMERCIAL MANAGER
VIC & TAS (NEW POSITION)

VIKING

As Viking continues to grow, we're expanding our on-road commercial team to provide even greater support to our trade partners.

We are looking for an energetic, commercially driven Commercial Manager to join our sales team, servicing Eastern & Southern Victoria and Tasmania, working alongside our existing Victorian Commercial Manager.

The ideal candidate will be a strong relationship builder with a proven track record in sales and business development.

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- Build strong relationships with existing and new trade partners.
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Window Seat

MOVE over Ryanair, there is a new competitor in town who has stolen your name and has a penchant for delicate soul singing with a nasal tenor.

Performer James Blunt (**pictured**) has changed his legal name from James Hillier Blount to Ryan Bel Air in recognition of his new album *Airplane Mode* hitting top spot on the British charts.

While the screenshot of the deed poll change on Blunt's social media accounts has baffled many fans, those tuned into the star's offbeat sense of humour are 'on board' with the gag.

A back and forth with X user JoeBangles11 may explain the motivation for the move, with the fan repeatedly demanding Blunt reveal his favourite cheese publicly for charity.

Last week, JoeBangles said he'd change his name to James Blunt if *Airplane Mode* went to number one, but the real Blunt beat him to the punch.



Nominate a cruise star

OPINION



Joel Katz is the executive director in Australasia, Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA).

IT'S fantastic to see so many outstanding travel advisors and agencies putting themselves and their colleagues forward for recognition at the 2026 CLIA Cruise Industry Awards.

But we know there are still plenty of exceptional people out there who have not quite taken that step.

Perhaps you are waiting for someone else to nominate you?

Perhaps you are thinking your achievements aren't quite award-worthy, or perhaps you're simply too busy doing what you do best - delivering extraordinary cruise experiences for your valued clients.

Here is your reminder: do not underestimate what you bring to our industry.

The CLIA Awards celebrate the passion, professionalism, innovation and commitment that make our unique cruise community so special.

From the seasoned experts to the rising stars, from individual advisors to the agencies setting new standards, there is so much worth celebrating.

And there is nothing wrong with putting your own hand up.

Self-nomination is not about boasting, it is about taking pride in your achievements and giving your hard work and commitment the recognition it deserves.

Equally, if you know a colleague who goes above and beyond but would never dream of nominating themselves, perhaps it is time you gave them a little nudge, or put their name forward yourself.

> "Do not underestimate what you bring to the industry"

With this year's celebrations promising a night of glitz, glamour and a few surprises, there's never been a better time to step into the spotlight.

But first, you need to be in the running. Nominations close at the end of Fri 20 Nov.

Nominate yourself, or nominate a colleague.

Celebrate someone who deserves their moment.

Just don't be the one wishing you'd entered when the lights go up on our industry's biggest night.

Nominate today **HERE**.

Rudder investigated

THE National Transportation Safety Board in the US has launched an investigation into why the steering system of an oil tanker malfunctioned and collided with *American Heritage*.

Investigators said the tanker's rudder became stuck prior to the collision with the cruise ship. *AB*

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HURTIGRUTEN

Lux debut in Croatia

SOFITEL has announced the signing of Sofitel Kaštela, a luxury beachfront resort in Croatia that is set to open in 2029, in partnership with asset management business Odien Group.

Kaštela will be the first internationally branded luxury hotel in Croatia.

Conveniently located between Split and Split International Airport, the resort lands as Croatia continues to develop into one of the Mediterranean's leading destinations.

"[The resort] will embody French luxury while embracing the spirit, heritage and lifestyle of the Adriatic coast," Sofitel CEO Maud Bailly said. *ZH*

LUXURY ALL YEAR IN SAINT-TROPEZ

EXCLUSIVE

SAINT-TROPEZ (ST) is looking to strengthen its position in the luxury travel market, with new five-star hotel openings, an extended tourism season and its distinctive Provençal village atmosphere central to the destination's appeal.

Saint-Tropez Tourism director told Laurent Grosso ***TD*** that ST's appeal to high-end travellers went beyond its reputation for glamour, beach clubs and summer nightlife, pointing to its combination of boutique accommodation, fine dining, local culture and village character.

"Exquisite hotels, fine dining, Provençal cuisine, the atmosphere of a village" were among the defining elements of the destination's luxury offering, Grosso said.



"Saint-Tropez is not like a big city like Nice or Paris, it's a small village, only 3,000 inhabitants."

It is this village identity that serves as an important point of difference for the French Riviera destination, which has built an international reputation among luxury travellers while retaining the character of a small Mediterranean community.

Grosso also said ST wants travellers to experience the destination throughout the year, with autumn and winter offering different reasons to visit.

"Every season has something to give, our challenge is to show the other Saint-Tropez, the one that lives throughout the year, far away from the summer clichés," he said.

Gastronomy, culture, wellness and events strengthen the destination's appeal outside of peak seasons, Grosso suggested.

"To us, it's about offering them a memorable experience, in every season...we have the chance to have a very diverse clientele: couples, families, groups of friends, international high-end clientele, but also local visitors," he continued.

Saint-Tropez will is set to see an influx of interest in 2027 when HBO's fourth season of The White Lotus, filmed across Saint-Tropez, Cannes and Monaco, airs. *ZH*

Explora links Steamery

EXPLORA Journeys has introduced premium garment steamers by Scandinavian brand Steamery across all Ocean Suites, Penthouses and Residences in its three ship fleet.

New in-suite additions follow guest feedback and aims to elevate convenience, meaning travellers do not have to visit onboard laundry facilities.

The partnership joins existing luxury suite amenities, including Dyson appliances, as the cruise line continues its residential-style approach to luxury. *ZH*

Moreton Bay to see second five-star opening

MORETON Bay will welcome a second five-star hotel in 2027, with construction beginning on a 112-room luxury property at Mango Hill, north of Brisbane.

Developed by Maple Development Group and operated by La Vie Hotels & Resorts, it will feature a premium bathhouse, wellness facilities and family-friendly leisure experiences, with a proposed golf driving range also planned, subject to approval.

"A luxury hotel of this calibre at Mango Hill, right on Brisbane's doorstep and within easy reach of Brisbane Airport, gives visitors another compelling reason to stay longer rather than pass through," Tourism and Events Moreton Bay CEO Luke Edwards said. *ZH*



A preferred spot

PREFERRED Hotels & Resorts will be opening several new properties in 2027, with locations ranging from North America, Europe and the Middle East.

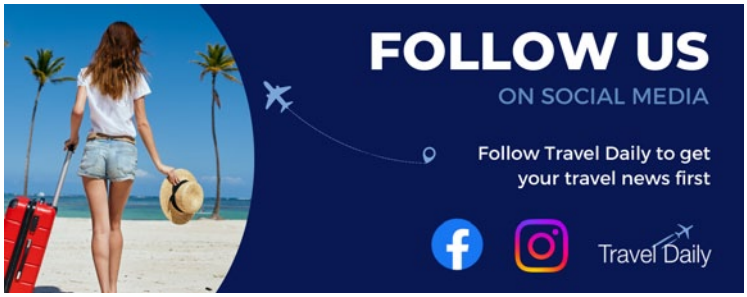
Highlights include The Botany in St. Thomas, The Osorio Hotel in Lisbon, Wynn Al Marjan Island in the UAE and The Shenandoah Nature Resort in Virginia.

The company will soon open properties in Finland, Spain and Iceland as well. *JB*



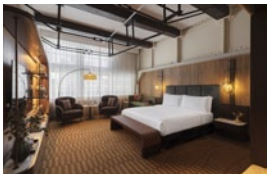
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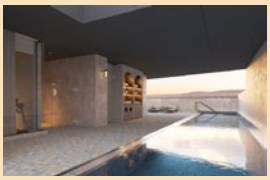
Ovolo Sydney Wooloomooloo will undergo a $30 million refurbishment, set for a Q1 2027 completion. Each room will be restyled with contemporary interiors that complement the historical site. The pool area will now an include an exercise space catered for restorative pilates, yoga, weight training and cardio. Highlighting the gastronomic options is the central bar, serving crafted cocktails and an in-depth wine list.



Park Inn by Radisson Bangkok Sukhumvit 13 has reopened following a renovation. 79 guest rooms have been renovated, including one family suite, with each key including smart TVs, reading lamps and built-in furnishing, catered towards both business and leisure travellers. The new restaurant area serves up to 60 guests, offering daily buffet breakfast from 6:00 am to 11:00 am.



Qatar's **Zulal Wellness Resort by Chiva-Som** has introduced the Postpartum Recovery Retreat Programme, designed to support mothers going through the physical and emotional transition following childbirth. Developed in partnership with Sidra Medicine, the program incorporates therapeutic treatments, nutritional guidance, gentle movement and dedicated maternal care.



The Eléme Day Spa will open at Adelaide's **Crystalbrook Sam**, building on its locations in Cairns and Byron Bay. Integrated in the wellness treatments are Kangaroo Island Ligurian honey, Eyre Peninsula black jade, Emu Bay lavender, South Australian olive oil and coastal sea salt. Treatments come in the form of three 60-minute rituals, combining a massage, foot soak and salt scrub. The spa is open to both hotel guests and locals.



Layara is a new bar opening on 27 Nov at **Mandarin Oriental Makati, Manila**. Located above the Ayala Triangle Gardens, the bar offers a selection of classic and signature cocktails, with the menu changing quarterly. Each menu will focus on a specific destination in the Philippines, shedding light on its traditions, seasonal produce and culinary heritage. Layara's debut menu will be inspired by Cebu.

QF goes all in on Bluey



QANTAS has revealed its latest partnership with the adored kids TV series *Bluey*, with themed aircraft liveries, inflight products and lounge experiences set to roll out across its domestic and international network.

Two Christmas-themed liveries fly during the festive season - a QantasLink Dash-8 Q400 operating across regional Australia and a Qantas Freight Airbus A321 flying domestically and to destinations across Asia and New Zealand.

In Jan 2027, a *Bluey*-branded Qantas A380 will take to international routes, including services to London, Los Angeles, Singapore and more.

Families can get in on the fun and follow the aircraft on its travels with a dedicated Bluey tracker launching on qantas.com.

"*Bluey* has captured the imagination of millions around the world and is one of the most successful TV shows to come out of Australia, sharing the warmth and character of family life in Queensland along the way," Qantas chief brand and corporate affairs officer Danielle Keighery said.

"Qantas has championed that same spirit for more than a century," she continued.

Bluey-themed children's kits will be available across Qantas' network from late Jan, alongside limited-edition pyjamas, while selected international lounges will receive Bluey-inspired makeovers of their Joey Club.

"*Bluey* is much loved by families in Australia and in many of the destinations we fly to, we look forward to sharing this partnership," she continued. *ZH*

VA share buy-up

VIRGIN Australia has completed an on-market purchase of 8.78 million ordinary shares to meet obligations under its employee share incentive agreements.

The shares were acquired by the VA Share Trust at an average price of $2.7886 each, with the transaction completed on 17 Nov, according to an ASX statement. *ZH*

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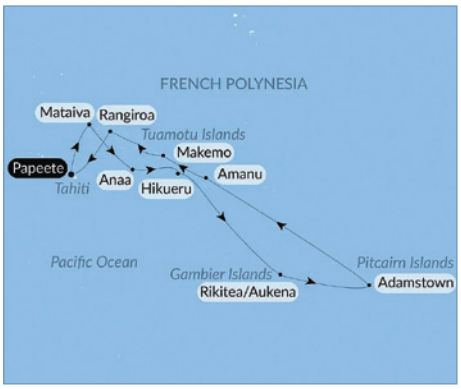
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