TRAVELDAILY
traveldaily.com.au
Friday 27th Nov 2026

Today's issue of *TD*

Travel Daily today features seven pages of news, including our **Corporate Update,** plus a full page from **Helloworld.**

ATIA sets the bar

THE Australian Travel Industry Association (ATIA) has released its 2026 Benchmarking Reports, allowing members to see exactly where they stand in the industry.

Businesses can now view how their operating costs, profit margins, short-term financial health and debt compare with their industry segment and peers in their TTV bracket, as well as the brackets above and below.

Across ATIA-accredited businesses, operating expenses now sit at 12% of revenue, down from 15% in FY23, while the net profit margin rose to 2% from 1%.

"Cold, hard, objective data is one of the most powerful tools a business can have," ATIA CEO Dean Long said. *JM*

Sydney setting records

MORE than 35 million passengers travelled through Sydney Airport in the first 10 months of 2026, up 0.6% on the same period last year.

Domestic passenger numbers grew 0.7% to 21.07 million, while international passenger numbers increased 0.4% to 14.12 million.

Singapore remained Sydney's most popular international destination in the first 10 months of the year, with almost 638,000 departing passengers, up 1.9%.

Auckland grew 7% to almost 480,000 passengers, while Hong Kong increased 12.2% to more than 431,000.

Those passengers are moving faster too, with 98.3% of



international arrivals clearing the border in under 10 minutes during the third quarter, a 19% improvement since 2024.

SmartGate kiosk capacity at Sydney has nearly doubled of late, from 40 to 75, allowing more passengers to use automated border processing.

Sydney is gearing up for an even busier summer travel season, with new airlines and destinations coming to the airport from next month.

A record 54 airlines are set to fly in and out of Sydney in 2027, with new players including Shenzhen Airlines and Air Tahiti Nui. *MS*

HLO on the frontline

HELLOWORLD has expressed its gratitude to industry partners for joining its Frontliners Forum in Perth last week - see **page eight**.

Entire Soiree 2027

ENTIRE Travel Group is inviting agents to register for its Travel Showcase & Soiree, taking place in Feb 2027 across Melbourne, Brisbane and Sydney.

Attendees will gain destination and travel product insights from suppliers and tourist boards, as well as enjoy an evening of food, music and networking.

There will also be more than $100,000 in travel prizes up for grabs - click **HERE** to register. *JM*

Hop on HA deals

HAWAIIAN Airlines is offering Aussies $10 Island Hopper fares in Hawai'i when combined with the airline's Black Fri discounted international fares, starting at $999 return from Sydney.

The sale ends 02 Dec for travel between 17 Jan and 23 Jun. *JM*







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Window Seat

GOD forbid someone takes home some nice souvenirs.

A Frenchman enjoying a holiday on the Italian island of Sardinia was caught by customs officers carrying 12 bottles of sand, with each one labelled for a different beach he had retrieved the sand from.

Unfortunately for him, a local law was introduced in 2017 banning the removal, ownership and selling of sand, sea shells and pebbles from Sardinia's beaches.

The man now faces a €3,000 (A$4,960) fine, and is no doubt wishing he had simply purchased a real souvenir.

As for the bottles of sand, they have been confiscated and will be returned to the beaches they originated from.

Travel risks on the rise

AS GLOBAL travel risks become more unpredictable and interconnected, David Cameron (**left**) and Louise Volsen (**right**) from International SOS believe that the industry should focus on improving resilience and rapid response abilities rather than treating each crisis in isolation.

Speaking at FACTS 2026, Cameron, who is the company's chief security officer, explained that while every travel organisation likes to have precise forecasting of what the global climate will look like next, accurate predictions are almost always impossible.

"This tells us that structured anticipation is very important for organisations - you must anticipate that there are going to be disruptive events, and you have to be listening for weak signals which are out there and understanding the so-whats behind them," he said.



"Cross-functional cooperation in all of this is really important - meaning the extent to which travel managers work with security, work with senior business executives, and ensure that they've got one message, [so they can] build resilience from the ground up."

According to International SOS's data, there has been a 20% YoY increase in countries where it has issued special advisories.

Volsen, the company's senior director, account management & client services, explained that these advisories are becoming more frequent and lasting longer than ever before. *SH/JB*

TRAVELDAILY ON LOCATION

LE HAVRE

Today's issue of *TD* is coming to you courtesy of MSC Cruises, which is hosting us on *MSC World Asia* for the ship's inaugural sailing from Le Havre to Barcelona

AFTER checking out from the Mercure Gare de Lyon Opera Bastille in Paris, we are now travelling by train bound for MSC Cruises' highly anticipated *MSC World Asia* for her debut sailing and celebrations.

After exploring the line's 24th vessel and third LNG ship in the World Class series, we will join a special media event with MSC Cruises' leadership.

Then it will be time to rest up and prepare for the exciting naming ceremony tomorrow - stay tuned for the big updates.



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Cruise's turn for the worst

FLIGHT Centre Travel Group chief executive officer Graham 'Skroo' Turner (**pictured**) has warned Australia's cruise sector is "sailing away" due to the government's inaction on maritime regulations.

Australia is risking losing billions of dollars in economic activity and thousands of jobs, Turner said, unless governments act to make the country a more competitive destination for the sector.

Turner argued Australia is taking its cruise industry for granted at a time when global demand is growing, with high operating costs, port charges and regulatory barriers prompting cruise companies to reconsider their Australian deployments.



"Ships move; hotels don't...if governments don't understand that cruise ships can take their business elsewhere, we risk losing a significant economic opportunity to other markets," Turner exclaimed.

Cruise tourism contributes more than $6.68 billion annually to the Australian economy and supports more than 20,000 jobs, according to recently released data from CLIA and the Australian Cruise Association (***TD*** 19 Nov 2026). *MS*

New QTIC board

THE Queensland Tourism Industry Council (QTIC) has made new additions to its board, appointing Ryan Both, executive general manager, aviation growth & development at Brisbane Airport, and John Sharpe, director at Brisbane River Icons.

In addition, co-founder and managing director of Oztix, Stuart Field, has joined as an events industry representative on a two-year term, ensuring the MICE sector has a dedicated voice on the board.

Meanwhile, Abbey Filko, founder of The Marketing Circle, and Mark Evans, owner of Paronella Park, resigned from the QTIC board. *JB*

MH buys Boeings

MALAYSIAN Airlines (MH) has made an order for up to 16 Boeing 787 Dreamliner jets, with 10 guaranteed and the opportunity for six more.

MH plans to operate the 787-10 across its long-haul network, connecting Malaysia with Europe and other destinations in SE Asia.

The 787-10 will hold up to 375 passengers and use 25% less fuel than the aircraft it will replace.

MH's growth plans align with the prediction of 5,000 aircraft in SE Asia through 2045, including over 850 widebody jets. *JB*

Oz bears fruit for Just You



JUST You is marking one year since its entry into the Australian market (***TD*** 26 Nov 2025), off the back of surging solo travel demand nation-wide.

The operator's trade sales director, Tom Morgan, explained that its launch came at a pivotal time for the solo traveller.

"It has been a fantastic time to bring our solo travel product to Australia - the shift in attitudes towards independent travel has created a significant opportunity for a specialist operator offering a genuinely tailored solo touring experience," he said.

"Australians have embraced our product just as we hoped, bringing their sense of adventure and sense of humour to our tours around the world.

"Outside the UK, Australia was one of the first markets we expanded into, alongside Canada, and we've seen strong growth over the past 12 months.

"Australians love our unique model, which combines the freedom of independent travel with the social benefits of exploring the world with like-minded people," Morgan added.

Looking back on the first 12 months, Japan and Europe were among the standout destinations for Australian solo travellers, with some particularly strong interest in southern Italy.

Just You has also seen plenty of enthusiasm from travel agents across the country, who Morgan said understand the desire for a dedicated, streamlined solution for solo travel.

Moving forward, Just You is planning a trade-focused expansion, including the launch of an online agent training portal in the coming months. *JB*

To read ***Travel Daily***'s new solo travel special report, click **HERE**.



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TRAVELDAILY ON LOCATION

Santorini

Today's issue of *TD* is coming to you from aboard the *Viking Vela* cruising in the Aegean.

SANTORINI is a must-see Greek island destinations, and as the tourist season here draws to a close, we are fortunate to be the only ship visiting today.

Many guests are set to experience the unique wines produced under the high winds and volcanic soil conditions, while the included tours take in the dramatic views and Insta-worthy architecture of blue roofs and whitewashed houses.

The island is accessed by local tenders, taking pax to coaches which later return to the top of a cable car where every guest receives a ticket to return to the ship courtesy of Viking.

Experts warn of Black Friday backlash

INDUSTRY experts are sounding the alarm on the effects of Black Friday on consumers' booking behaviour and trust in brands, especially as the extended sale period has become more widespread this year.

"Things have never been so frequently manipulated...it is yield control on steroids and the pursuit of revenue maximisation over all else," cautioned Complex Travel's Mark Trim (**pictured**).

The biggest risk is "the impact of opaque pricing on brand loyalty [among consumers] and long term decision-making in a market with softening confidence", he said.

Trim also questioned the effectiveness of the term 'Black Friday', a major sales event which originated in the United States and has since morphed into a weeks-long global phenomenon.

Consumers may expect deep discounts during the Black Friday period, but only encounter more



modest offers, which could lead to a degree of apathy when the next sale takes place, Trim said.

"Most airfare tactics don't feel like a sale, with very restricted inventory plus numerous caveats and blackout periods," he said, adding that the cruise industry seems to have committed to more genuine offers this year.

Meanwhile, retail analyst Professor Gary Mortimer criticised the evolution of Black Friday into a month of sales, with many businesses discounting weeks before and after the official date on 27 Nov.

The challenge for some is that continual sales lose their impact over time, Mortimer cautioned.

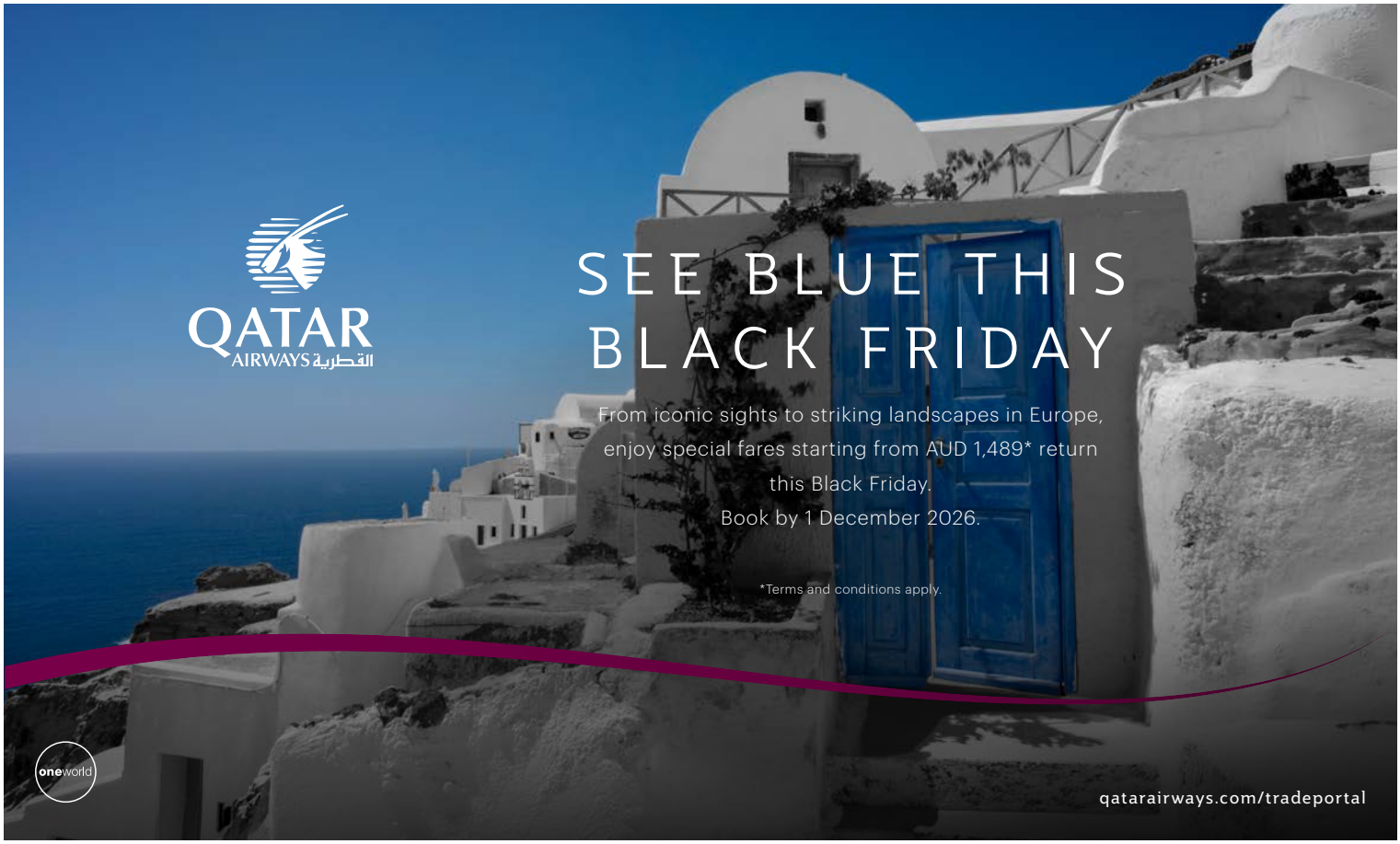
It is a particularly dangerous prospect for businesses, he added, as consumers have been trained to become more strategic, delaying purchases until they believe the best offer is available.

"If consumers responded to 40% off last month, retailers may feel pressure to offer 50% off next month to generate the same sales lift," he explained.

"The result is a cycle that erodes margins and makes it increasingly difficult for retailers to return to full-price selling."

Instead, Trim prefers a short, targeted discount period.

"We'd far prefer airlines to commit to proper earlybird sales to build a base load of seats for next year, which are unique offers to the travel industry, rather than piggyback on ecommerce or retail terms like Black Friday," he added. *JHM*



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Travel Daily



Gate 7 gives thanks to trade



TOURISM marketing agency Gate 7 brought its North American clients and Australian trade partners together at its annual Thanksgiving lunch yesterday in Sydney.

Guests enjoyed a traditional Thanksgiving spread of turkey, ham and pumpkin pie, while catching up with colleagues and destination partners, including Visit California, San Francisco Lake, Explore Louisiana, Greater Palm Springs and Visit Lake Tahoe.

Addressing guests, Gate 7 founder and MD Jo Palmer reflected on the strength of these industry relationships and the opportunities they create.

"Just really want to genuinely, deeply say thank you for being such awesome partners, allowing us to do such incredible things and enrich so many lives through this amazing thing that we're all tapped into called travel."

One of the year's standout achievements was Gate 7's collaboration with Visit California, which saw 100 Aussie travel trade guests attend an NFL game at the Melbourne Cricket Ground, as the Los Angeles Rams took on the San Francisco 49ers. *JM/MV*

Pictured: The Gate 7 team - Jade Jones, Jo Palmer, Eva Huezo and David McMahon.

TA data breached

TRAVEL Associates is investigating a cyber security incident after detecting unusual activity in a third-party booking system, saying it believes a significant number of customer records may have been accessed by unknown persons.

The agency said its operations will continue as normal and customers are able to continue their travel plans in accordance with existing bookings - see **HERE** for more details and updates. *JM*

Luxe travellers undeterred



LUXURY travel demand across Australia and New Zealand remains resilient despite global uncertainty and disruptions to international air travel, Signature Travel Network GM ANZ Damian Borg (**pictured**) revealed.

Speaking to ***Travel Daily*** at the Signature Travel Conference this week, Borg explained that the luxury market had shown significant flexibility, particularly in response to the Middle East conflict, with some travellers shifting to business and first-class services with Asian carriers rather than abandoning their plans.

"Taking 37 to 42 hours to get to Europe was not a problem - they bounce and they'll find another way," Borg said.

He also pointed to recent travel industry figures indicating no reduction in bookings, with luxury travellers spending more, booking further ahead and planning multiple trips simultaneously.

Premium brands are expanding their product offerings, Borg said, creating more opportunities for agents to introduce existing clients to new experiences.

Ritz-Carlton, Aman, Celebrity and Trafalgar were among the names introducing new products and destinations, including yacht and river cruising, as well as small-group exploration and expedition experiences.

"There's plenty of new product under trusted brands that these agents should be mining every day," Borg added. *JM*



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On Board: Viking Vela

The Chef's Table

One of the specialty restaurants aboard is The Chef's Table, which serves a rotating multi-course degustation menu with varying themes throughout each voyage - along with matched wines.

Reservations are required - it is a very popular option among all passengers, and there is no additional charge for this culinary adventure, with some of the menus including Californian, Korean, Middle Eastern and British cuisine.



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Inside the solo travel boom

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CORPORATE UPDATE

FCM unveils new AI tool

FCM Travel has launched FCM Analytics MCP at this week's FACTS Summit in Sydney, which brings travel data into AI tools.

The connector lets travel managers ask questions about their FCM data in plain language inside the AI tool they use.

While many travel managers already run their travel data through AI, this usually means exporting a file, explaining the columns and working out the calculations again, with answers often not matching their reports, according to FCM Travel.

FCM MCP gets around that by running the same data and metrics as FCM's dashboards, so the numbers line up with what is already being used.

The service is hosted and secured by FCM, so customer data isn't used to train third-party AI models.

"Travel teams shouldn't have



to choose between the speed of AI and the confidence of their reports," FCM global head of product Jessica Dunderdale (**pictured**) said.

"A dashboard is like a printed report: FCM Analytics MCP is like a colleague who has read every report you own and can answer the follow-up question.

"Our account managers use the same connectors, so they arrive at every conversation with analysis already in hand." *MS*

A taste of SWISS

SWISS International Air Lines is bringing the flavours of Valais to the world, with a culinary takeover by Emiliano Gabriel Vignoni Alvarellos, executive chef at Six Senses Crans-Montana.

Over the northern winter months, first and business passengers on long-haul flights from Zurich and Geneva will enjoy culinary creations such as chicken dashi with confit leek and truffle, fjord trout with citrus beurre blanc, and more. *MS*

Alliance in a tailspin

ALLIANCE Airlines' board is facing a stockholder revolt over the company's plunging share price, which over the past 12 months has nosedived from $2.45 to 40c.

The company posted an underlying profit before tax of $38.2 million in FY26, down from $82.1 million the previous year, while net debt climbed to $459.8 million from $378 million.

At Alliance's recent AGM in Brisbane, shareholders called on the chair to resign, *The Australian* reported, and called into question the suitability of chief executive officer Steve Greenway. *MS*

CT caps off conference



CT PARTNERS has capped off a record year of $2.55 billion in TTV at its five-day conference in Asia, which brought together 110 independent travel business owners and suppliers.

The conference started at the W Shanghai, where members met 36 supplier partners one-on-one over the conference's first two days, while also taking part in hands-on AI workshops led by Tasser.ai founder Adrian Giles.

Attendees then boarded The Ritz-Carlton Yacht Collection's (RCYC) *Luminara* for a cruise to Hong Kong, receiving a first-hand onboard experience and taking part in tailored workshops hosted by vice president & GM Seb Seward and director travel partnerships Anastasia Kotanidis.

The conference capped off a record year for CT, with air volumes up 10% and overrides paid up 11%.

Next year's outlook is strong too, with first quarter ticketed air revenue already up 15%.

A special guest at the conference was newly appointed RCYC chief executive officer Alan Leibman, who welcomed guests at the gala dinner and emphasised the importance of the Australian market to the cruise line's growth.

CT also announced Bali as the destination for next year's conference, with the group to take over the five-star Jumeirah Bali for the event.

MEANWHILE, CT has confirmed its board for next year, which will be made up of Joe Araullo (chair), Peter Muller, Gary Reichenberg, Rachel Argent, Michael Chase-Smith, Shane Barr, and Anna McMurtrie (elected director). *MS*

Pictured at the CT Partners conference: Seb Seward, RCYC; Nicole Boyer, CT Partners; Anastasia Kotanidis, RCYC; and Matt Masson, CT Partners.



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SPECIALS

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specials@traveldaily.com.au

TTC Tour Brands is allowing agents to stack Black Friday offers with eligible group sales discounts across Trafalgar River Cruises, Scheduled Groups and Small Group Tours. Black Friday deals across TTC brands are available until 07 Dec. Call 1800 002 007 to find out more.

CLLIX Apartments and Hotels' four-day flash sale kicks off today, with up to 30% off stays this summer. Participating properties include Brisbane Central, Ruby and Marine Quarter in the Gold Coast and Exhibition Street, Melbourne. Deals are available on bookings made before 30 Nov and for stays until 31 Jan 2027. Call 07 3518 4108.

There is still time to secure **Celebrity Cruises**' sale, with up to 75% off a second guest and savings of up to $1,700 per stateroom. The offer is available on select sailings of three nights or more, departing between 26 Nov and 10 May 2029. To make a booking, call 1800 003 002.

Time is running out to make the most of **Vietjet's** Black Friday sale, ending tomorrow. The sale gives travellers Eco-fares from $199 and up to 20% off Deluxe fares. Travel is valid between 04 Jan and 31 May 2027. Call 1800 844 219 to secure this deal.

Aldi Holidays has discounts on a range of holiday packages, available between now and 30 Nov. Highlights include four nights at Sea World Resort, Gold Coast from $1,499 per family, five nights at The Naviti Resort, Fiji from $1,699pp and a 13-day 'Essential Europe' tour from $4,499pp. To book, call 1300 369 664.

APT Luxury Travel still has a range of Black Friday offers to book until 02 Dec. Using the code BF500, the range includes savings of $2,400 per couple on the 15-day 'Magnificent Europe' cruise, $2,600 off per couple on the eight-day 'Great Barrier Reef Discovery', and the 12-day 'Tasmania Complete' tour now $1,600 off per couple. Call 1300 336 932 to book.

Expedia Travel Agent Affiliate Program (TAAP) has launched a new sale, with savings starting from 30% for hotels globally. Bookings are open until 03 Dec, with travel valid through the end of 2027. For bookings, call 1300 397 334.

With **Malaysia Airlines,** travellers can secure economy class fares from $919 and business class fares from $3,549 for travel to select destinations across the airline's network. These deals are available until 02 Dec, with travel valid between 25 Nov and 31 Oct 2027. Call 1800 985 919 to find out more.

Blue Lagoon Cruises has 40% off select cruises aboard *Yasawa Princess II* as part of its Black Friday Flash Sale. The sale period is on now and finishes 02 Dec. Travel is valid from Dec through Apr 2027. Travellers and agents can secure their next cruise with a 25% deposit. To make a booking, call +679 999 5512.

Adina Perth reimagined



ADINA Perth has unveiled a multi-million-dollar refurbishment just in time for the summer season, as part of TFE Hotels' $100 million investment across its first-generation Adina Apartment Hotels (***TD*** 15 Sep 2026).

Redesigned by Studio del Castillo, the transformation encompasses guestrooms, public spaces, the pool deck and the arrival experience.

The hotel's 138 studios and one- and two-bedroom apartments have been refreshed to maximise extra space, flexibility and the comforts of home.

"We're seeing travellers spend more time in Perth and use the city as a base to explore the state," TFE's regional general manager for WA, Ajay Vaid, said.

"Having a kitchen, laundry and separate, thoughtfully designed living space gives people the flexibility to travel at their own pace," he added. *JM*

A Hahnair Advent

HAHNAIR has launched an Advent competition for travel agents worldwide, giving all participants the chance to win a total of €6,000 (A$9,920) for their travel agency.

Starting 29 Nov, a new Christmas-themed game will go live **HERE** on each Advent Sunday - subscribe **HERE** for reminders.

Going beyond Bali

DATA from Afterpay has revealed that interest in trips to Rarotonga, Cook Islands has seen 50% YoY growth, exceeding Bali by almost half (+28%).

Aussies are also increasingly seeking other destinations including Hervey Bay (+29%), Melbourne Avalon (+26%), Bangkok (+22%) and Queenstown (+18%), the data showed.

Beyond new preferences in destinations, Aussies are booking more spontaneous trips, with 25.6% of recorded flights departing within two weeks of booking - up from 24.3% during the same period in 2025.

Gen Z is leading the spontaneous revolution, with an average booking window of 28 days, compared to Gen X, which books 38 days ahead. *JB*

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