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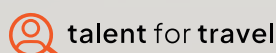
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Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today features nine pages of industry news, including our **Business Events News**, plus a cover wrap from **NTIA** and a full page from **Bunnik Tours**.

NTIAs almost here

THE countdown to the 2026 National Travel Industry Awards (NTIA) is on, with just 10 days to go until the industry's night of nights on 10 Oct at Palladium Crown Melbourne.

Around 1,300 attendees are expected at the gala, which this year has attracted a record number of nominations.

The Australian Travel Industry Association (ATIA) has revealed the complete lineup of sponsors, which includes blue chip brands Trafalgar, Virgin Australia, Helloworld, CVFR Travel Group, AmaWaterways, and many more.

See the full list of sponsors in today's issue on the **cover page**.

Confusion over changes

UP TO a million Australians could be relying on complimentary credit card travel insurance that has been either reduced or removed, new research has found.

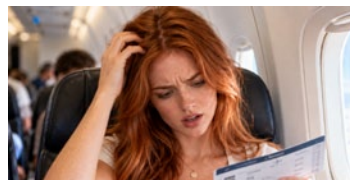
A survey by Compare Club uncovered that over half of Aussie travellers do not have a clear understanding of recent travel insurance changes, which are part of an overhaul of card rewards in response to RBA's surcharge changes, which are in effect from today (**TD** 18 Sep 2026).

Changes to selected CommBank cards took effect on 29 Sep, while a new round of Westpac and Bankwest insurance changes has commenced today.

Further cuts announced by ANZ will take effect in Dec 2026 and Mar 2027.

Meanwhile, NAB already reduced or removed travel cover on selected cards in May.

Half of Aussies (51.3%) said they had not checked whether their



own card's travel insurance was affected, while 30% had no idea that major banks were reducing or removing complimentary travel insurance.

"Cardholders need to identify their exact card, read the new policy to decide if it still provides enough cover and check the activation requirements before they leave Australia," Compare Club head of research Kate Browne said. *JM*

Bunnik saves Asia

THERE is still time to make the most of Bunnik Tours' savings on Asia, with up to \$2,000 off trips to South Korea and Cambodia.

See more on the **back page**.

TD TRAVELDAILY

ON LOCATION



Melbourne

Today's issue of **TD** is coming to you from **Crowne Plaza Melbourne** for the 2026 MTA National Conference.

MOBILE Travel Agents' annual event kicked off yesterday with pre-conference advisor training for members. Today's agenda includes further training, GDS updates and cruise recaps, then a timely session on the RBA's new card surcharge ban, with Izzy Limn from Mint Payments and Nicole O'Sullivan from Birds Eyed View Consulting covering what the changes mean for travel advisors.

This evening, delegates will enjoy 180° panoramic city views at a welcome event hosted at Aerial Melbourne. *ZH*

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ATIA loses battle, pledges to win war

THE Australian Travel Industry Association (ATIA) has released a six-part fact sheet for members dealing with the RBA changes to credit card surcharging, which took effect from today.

Following a webinar outlining the best way to respond to the loss of surcharging, ATIA's new fact sheets cover key several items of concern, including which cards and transactions are affected, how to review provider arrangements, lower-cost options such as PayTo and PayID, and



advice for offering discounts for lower-cost payment methods.

While the body undertook extensive lobbying to warn against implementing the RBA changes - which did yield a three-month delay - ATIA confirmed it would continue to push its case with the Reserve Bank.

The body added it would keep raising the issue as pricing across the payments market plays out.

"We fought this change hard and we will continue to raise our concerns with the evidence the RBA has based its decision on,"

ATIA CEO Dean Long said.

"We took our concerns to the Reserve Bank twice in writing, met with them directly, and took the issue to government and the opposition, and that pressure bought members an extra three months to prepare," he added.

Reflecting on ATIA's latest toolkit, Long said the resource had been designed to cater for the individual needs of members.

"No two travel businesses are in the same position on payments, so we have focused on providing the tools and information for each member to map the best path forward," he said.

"While we have lost the fight in terms of the ban being put in place, we will keep pressing the Reserve Bank on the case it used to justify this decision."

ATIA will also host a dedicated session on communicating the change to consumers at its Beyond Borders conference. **AB**

JB completes buy

JOURNEY Beyond (JB) has expanded its national footprint with the completion of the acquisition of Kelsian Group's tourism assets (**TD** 09 Sep).

The purchase brings a collection of well-known tourism businesses into the Journey Beyond portfolio, spanning cruises, accommodation, sightseeing, tours and marine operations across Australia.

These include Captain Cook Cruises, resorts and tour operators on K'gari and more. **MS**

nib concludes sale

NIB Group has announced the completion of the sale of its Australian and New Zealand travel insurance businesses to Allianz Partners (**TD** 28 Jul 2026).

The company has also wrapped the sale of its World Nomads global travel insurance business to International Medical Group. **JM**

VA beefs up security

VIRGIN Australia is making changes to its business booking portal sign-in, introducing multi-factor authentication (MFA).

Users will set up MFA with a six-digit one-time password, which they will receive after signing in with their current credentials, and then resetting their existing password - more info **HERE**. **MS**

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Thursday 1st Oct 2026

Flip the model on its head

TALENT for Travel has today launched its candidate-first recruitment marketplace, giving businesses the ability to browse potential hires immediately. Founder and managing director Richard Taylor (**pictured**) said Talent Marketplace grew out of conversations with employers and jobseekers across the industry.

For Taylor, the key selling point is understanding the nuances of travel positions well enough to recognise not only someone's experience, but what roles may suit them.

"If that person [a traditional recruiter] does not understand the industry, and the intricacies of the role that you are searching for, then how can you expect them to go and find the right person, or more importantly, someone with potential to move into that role?" he questioned.

The marketplace currently displays a curated selection of candidates across all experience levels, including a separate listing reserved exclusively for senior executives.

Employers can browse anonymous profiles and request introductions, with candidates retaining control over whether their details are shared before an introduction is formally made.

Taylor said the featured profiles reflect his own assessment of the people he has met, rather than simply reproducing their CVs.

"This is my take on these people," he said, adding that



candidates have reviewed and approved their descriptions posted online.

The initial profiles are only a snapshot of Talent for Travel's wider candidate pool, with Taylor planning to highlight a larger body of talent over time.

Taylor told **Travel Daily** that he hopes the marketplace will also start conversations with employers whose ideal hire may not yet be featured.

"I just think it flips it all on its head," Taylor noted.

"Here's a great person, do their skills align with what you are looking for?"

"If they do, let's introduce you."

Taylor also hinted at plans that would make the entire website searchable for employers using keywords or search terms, similar to recruitment on platforms like Seek or LinkedIn jobs.

Asked what initial success looked like, Taylor said: "It would mean connecting people with opportunities they might not otherwise have seen." ZH

TokyoTokyo Old meets New

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Expedia activities

EXPEDIA Group B2B has announced the beta launch of its Rapid Activities API and recently acquired Tiqets inventory on Expedia TAAP.

Now available for selected partners, the Rapid Activities API offers a pre-curated supply of attractions, museums, tours and experiences, with a wider rollout planned for early 2027.

Meanwhile, the Tiqets activities can currently be accessed by a limited number of UK travel agencies, and are designed to simplify activity discovery and support faster, more relevant recommendations for travellers.

The launch comes off the back of new research from Expedia Group revealing that 77% of travellers want to book their trip on one platform. JM

Travelmarvel incentive

TRAVELMARVEL is giving agents the opportunity to unlock exclusive family rates when they book and deposit five cabins on its 'European Gems' 2027 departures between now and 31 Dec.

Those who qualify will be able to secure a special family rate booking in Jan 2027, with one cabin available per consultant on a selected 2027 'European Gems' or Mekong departure.

'European Gems' departures will be priced at \$1,495 per person twin share or \$1,995 solo, while Mekong cruises will be available for \$995 per person twin share or \$1,495 solo. JM

flydubai hijack plan

A **FLYDUBAI** flight from Dubai to Tel Aviv was diverted to Saudi Arabia yesterday amid reports that one pilot stabbed the other and allegedly planned to crash the plane as an act of terror.

The wounded pilot, Smit Machchhar, is being hailed a hero for resisting the attacker. AB

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Thursday 1st Oct 2026

Signature finds its bearings

MEMBER-OWNED travel cooperative Signature Travel Network has announced the launch of SigCompass, a centralised intelligence and analytics platform featuring personalised recommendations and business intelligence.

SigCompass was recently announced at Signature's annual owner's meeting in San Antonio (**pictured**), and aims to help travel advisors uncover growth opportunities and strengthen their client relationships.

Agency owners can see their revenue trends, advisor performance, client engagement and conversion opportunities in real-time.

Conversational prompts are also supported, allowing users to interrogate the platform with specific requests.

Developed in partnership with DataSQL and Toggle Travel, SigCompass is part of



Signature Agency Intelligence, the cooperative's growing ecosystem of artificial intelligence, network-wide insights, marketing intelligence, preferred partner data and advisor expertise.

"Our members have spent years building expertise and client relationships, yet much of that information has been spread across separate systems at the very moment a decision needs to be made," executive vice president information technologies Karen Yeates said.

The platform is currently only available to US member agencies, but its data insights will help inform trends relevant to agencies in Australia and NZ. *MS*

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Cruise Month arrives

CRUISE Month is set to kick off next week, with the campaign designed to help generate excitement around the summer sailing season.

Under the banner #LoveCruise, the initiative from Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA) includes social media activity, digital advertising, education opportunities, promotions and new resources for travel advisors.

A key focus of Cruise Month will be encouraging travellers to connect with their local CLIA consultant, highlighting their knowledge and expertise.

The first week of the campaign (04-10 Oct) will focus on ocean cruising, followed by river cruising (11-17 Oct), expedition cruising (18-24 Oct) and luxury cruising (25-31 Oct).

CLIA members can get involved, thanks to the refreshed Cruise Month Toolkit and an expanded webinar series - more details can be found **HERE**. *JM*

Cats off to Cairns

VIRGIN Australia will extend its Pets in Cabin initiative to its services between Cairns and Melbourne from 22 Oct.

The move brings the number of VA Pets in Cabin services to 10 nation-wide, available on routes departing Melbourne, Adelaide, the Gold Coast, the Sunshine Coast and now Cairns.

Since Pets launched in Oct last year, over 2,000 small cats and dogs have taken to the skies. *JB*

Climate a big threat

CLIMATE change is currently the biggest threat to tourism, according to the European Travel Commission CEO and executive director, Eduardo Santander.

Speaking at the Euronews Travel & Tourism Summit in Brussels recently, Santander said the continent needed to prepare for the rise of 'coolcations' in a "much more coordinated and comprehensive way". *JM*



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VA charters PER-Alice

VIRGIN Australia is set to operate a charter service on the Perth-Alice Springs route throughout the northern winter 2026/27 season.

Using a Boeing 737-700 aircraft, the weekly Fri flight is scheduled to take place from 30 Oct 2026 until 29 Jan 2027. *JM*

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Overnight spend rises

AUSTRALIANS spent more on domestic overnight trips during the Jun 2026 quarter compared to the same period last year, despite taking fewer trips and spending fewer nights away, the latest figures from Tourism Research Australia (TRA) show.

Overnight spend hit \$25.7 billion, up 2% from the Jun 2025 quarter, while overnight trips dropped slightly by 2% to 27 million, and nights per trip were down 2% to 89 million.

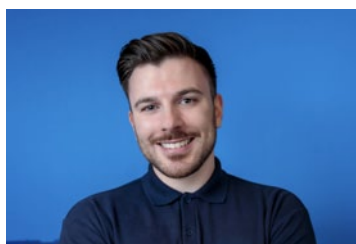
Aussies spent an average of three nights away per trip,

Just You appoints

JUST You has appointed Ashley Walker (**pictured**) as its new channel support manager, effective immediately.

Acting as the main point of contact for group booking enquiries, he will help reduce administrative requirements for the sales team, enabling them to spend more time visiting agents.

Walker brings around a decade of travel industry experience, including a stint at Riviera Travel, and will be based at the specialist solo tour operator's head office in the UK. *JM*



splashing \$289 per night and \$950 per trip.

Travellers staying in the Northern Territory spent the most, sinking \$390 per night despite taking the fewest overnight trips (276,000), while those in NSW spent the least (\$271) and travelled the most (nine million trips).

The majority of trips (13 million) were for leisure purposes, followed by visiting friends and relatives (10 million) and business (two million).

During the three months, Australians spent \$7.3 billion on accommodation and \$3.8 billion on domestic airfares.

According to the TRA statistics, domestic day trips also saw an increase during the Jun 2026 quarter, rising by 23% to reach \$13.8 billion, while the number of day trips taken were also higher, up 8% to hit 74.2 million.

Of the total number of day trips, 37.9 million were for holidays, 22.8 million were for visiting friends and family, and 5.1 million were for business. *JM*

WSI rides the bus

WESTERN Sydney International Airport (WSI) will operate an express electric shuttle service, alongside the start of passenger services from 25 Oct.

Dubbed the Super Shuttle WSI, the buses will provide direct transfers from WSI to locations including Parramatta CBD (\$25), Sydney CBD (\$55) and Sydney Kingsford Smith Airport (\$65).

Each bus will accommodate 37 passengers, including additional standing space and two wheelchair spaces.

Services will be scheduled around flight departure and arrival times, helping passengers plan their trip.

Tickets for Super Shuttle WSI will be available to purchase online and at kiosks located across the airport terminal. *JB*

Walker sails onward

SILVERSEA marketing director Philippa Walker has moved on from the cruise line, she has announced on LinkedIn.

Walker spent almost four years in the role, after moving over from Silversea's sister brand Royal Caribbean, where she served as partnerships manager.

On LinkedIn, she shared the exciting achievements she reached during her entire tenure of almost five years at Royal Caribbean Group.

"It's been a privilege to lead marketing and communications strategy across the APAC region, and I'm proud of what we built."

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Qantas on top of loyalty

QANTAS Frequent Flyer (QFF) has been named Australia's top travel loyalty program in a recently released study, *The Science of Loyalty 2026*.

The research, conducted by Honeycomb strategy, analysed 60 Australian programs across a range of industries, assessing them on three metrics: membership rate, engagement rate and impact of spend.

Receiving an overall score of 220, QFF was the third-largest



program in the study, with 44% of the Australian adult population being members.

However, QFF - like all of the other listed travel programs - had a weaker engagement rate, with 53% of members actively using the program.

It had an even weaker performance in the 'impact of spend' category, with only 18% of members exclusively flying with Qantas or Jetstar.

Despite this, the study credited QFF's strong performance in the travel segment to its multi-brand integration, citing members' ability to collect points from everyday spending, implementing a status credit rollover mechanic, as well as greater opportunities to access the lounge.

Out of the travel programs, Velocity Frequent Flyer came second with a score of 183, followed by Booking.com's Genius program (165), Accor Live Limitless (109) and Singapore Airlines' KrisFlyer (95).

Despite QFF leading for the majority of the study, Booking.com Genius performed better on impact of spend, with 22% of its members exclusively booking their trips with the OTA. *JM*

King pushes back

THE Federal Government launched the Sydney Airport Air Traffic Control Independent Assurance Panel yesterday to ensure that Airservices Australia implements measures to improve its stability and reliability.

Minister for Transport Catherine King said the panel will "ensure Airservices is taking practical and timely action to address challenges including air traffic control workforce planning, recruitment, training, roster resilience and system improvements".

The announcement coincides with the release of four preliminary reports from ongoing safety investigations into a series of close calls at Sydney Airport (*TD* 17 Aug 2026), which occurred as a result of Airservices Australia staff shortages.

Final reports will be released for all events in due time. *JM*

Royal the new ice queen



ROYAL Caribbean has revealed its 2028 summer lineup of Alaska vacations, with seven-night cruises across four ships.

The newly amplified *Ovation of the Seas*, as well as *Anthem of the Seas*, *Serenade of the Seas* and *Voyager of the Seas*, will all visit Alaska from Apr 2028.

Cruises will depart from Seattle, Seward and Vancouver, and are available to book now on the Royal Caribbean website.

Highlights will include visits to Skagway, Icy Strait Point and the Mendenhall Glacier in Juneau.

Guests will be able to take in sweeping views of the glaciers, mountains, and fjords from the all-glass North Star observation capsule on *Anthem* and *Ovation*.

Passengers travelling through Seward will also be able to enjoy a seamless beginning-to-end journey through RCL's new state-of-the-art terminal. *MS*

Vail profits down

VAIL Resorts has reported a drop in profits in Q4, with Epic Pass sales down 12% compared to the same period last year.

The American company earned a net income of US\$147.5 million (A\$211.6 million) for FY25, down from \$280 million (A\$401.7 million) the year prior.

It attributed the decline to "unfavourable weather conditions" across the western US, with record low snowfall and historically warm temperatures.

At the same time, Vail Resorts announced plans to complete two major lift projects at its largest ski area, Park City Mountain in Utah, ahead of the 2027/28 season.

The development follows Virtuoso revealing that over the last year, some Aussies are pivoting to ski fields closer to Australia such as Japan. *JM*

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QR best in the business



FLAT Beds has named Qatar Airways as the top business class airline for Australian travellers, as part of its Best Business Class Awards 2026.

Coming in second place was Turkish Airlines, followed by Finnair in third.

In Flat Beds' list of 20 airlines, Qantas finished in 7th spot and Air New Zealand ended in 12th.

Each airline was rated on their seat product, overall value, service, consistency and frequent flyer benefits.

"Qantas scored well given how similar its long-haul business class experience is across the A330, 787 and A380 aircraft," Mark Trim, managing director of Flat Beds, explained.

"Where it fell short was the airport experience and lounges, which can be crowded or need updating," he added.

"Dining was a notable area for improvement, with a basic

dessert offering, smaller portion sizes, and a lack of flexibility for on-demand dining.

"We also expect its consistency mark to take a step backwards in 2027, once its A321XLRs start servicing Asia with only a recliner-style seat, which doesn't even feature in-seat entertainment."

Across specific categories, Qatar also took out best business class meals and best airport experience, while Emirates won best business class service.

In addition, Oman Air won best value to Europe, while United won best value to North America.

Qantas and Air New Zealand took out second and third respectively in the best value to North America category.

Business class bookings on Flat Beds are currently up 20% YoY.

Trim accredited the growth to value, as customers book based on time, price and quality, rather than staying loyal to an airline. *JB*



Heritage goes south

HERITAGE Expeditions has launched a new 11-night voyage through the South Pacific, making calls in Fiji, Samoa, Tonga, and Wallis and Futuna.

Departing Nadi on 14 Mar aboard *Heritage Adventurer*, the 'Tropical Islands of Fiji, Samoa & Tonga Cruise' combines adventures in nature, ocean activities and cultural education.

While in Fiji, guests will explore the jungles of Bouma National Heritage Park and Tafua Rainforest Reserve, in addition to snorkelling at Palolo Deep Marine Reserve and the Swallows Cave.

Passengers will then head to Samoa where they will get up close with the nation's wildlife, and explore the capital of Apia, before stopping in Tonga to enjoy the beach or national parks. *JB*

Another stop for MEL

WORK is set to begin on stage two of the Melbourne Airport Rail project, the Federal and Victorian State Government announced.

Preparatory works start within weeks, while major construction will begin in 2028, with trains to reach the brand-new East Keilor station in 2031.

From there, passengers will be able to connect to Melbourne Airport, with trains running through downtown from the Cranbourne/Pakenham lines.

Stage three - the section of the project that will connect East Keilor with the airport - is still being worked through. *MS*



Window Seat

FORMER About France regional manager Patrick Benhamou is now taking on a far more rigorous role, which will require him to attend long lunches and numerous champagne tastings.

The charismatic French-Australian (**pictured**) has been appointed as the local ambassador for EPC Champagne, an innovative new French wine brand that focuses on 100% traceable single-vineyard cuvees.

Benhamou will be tasked with taking EPC across Sydney's top lunch and dinner tables, which included Tues' Signature Luxury Cruise Awards, where finalists and attendees all enjoyed a taste of the champagne's low-sugar, low-sulphite style.

In his own words, Benhamou told **Travel Daily** that his professional responsibility will be establishing that one glass of EPC is clearly not enough for proper assessment.







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ORGANISERS WANT GREEN TICK

EXCLUSIVE

A GROWING number of event planners and organisers are placing sustainability at the forefront of their decisions, according to Andrew Perolls, CEO of UK-based sustainability consultancy firm Greengage.

Speaking with **TD**, Perolls (**pictured**) said that meetings and events often form part of an organisation's footprint, which includes sustainability, carbon reduction and responsible procurement commitments.

"Five years ago, being able to demonstrate strong sustainability credentials could be a differentiator," Perolls said.

"Increasingly, for some buyers, it's becoming part of the criteria for getting through the door in the first place.

"Certification doesn't win the business on its own - the venue



still needs the right location, facilities, service and price, but increasingly it can help a venue qualify, compete and differentiate itself," he added.

According to research from the Global Business Travel Association (GBTA), 55% of travel buyers in APAC expected companies to increase investment in sustainable travel practices.

Research has also revealed that a third of organisations were selecting travel buyers based

on climate criteria, with 22% intending to do so.

Additionally, of the companies using climate criteria, 80% earmarked sustainability certifications as their number one priority.

Beyond credentials and energy use, Perolls said a larger number of organisers are adopting more practical methods of sustainability, ranging from limiting single-use materials and serving ethically-sourced food to implementing EV charging.

"One of the biggest changes, however, isn't necessarily what organisers are asking about - it's the level of evidence they expect in response."

Greengage runs the Ecosmart certification system, which allows hotels and meeting venues to demonstrate their efforts in promoting sustainability. *JB*

ABEA stays safe

THE Australian Business Events Association (ABEA) has launched ABEA BE:SAFE, its national safety guide for organisers, venues, exhibitors and suppliers (see it **HERE**).

Developed by ABEA's Risk and Safety Council, the guide brings information on work health and safety, relevant legislation, building and construction requirements and other risk considerations into one industry-led resource.

Guidance is included for every step of the event process, from planning to live operations, while taking into account the individual laws for each state and territory.

ABEA CEO Melissa Brown said that the new resource was made possible by stakeholders coming together to address the industry's shared challenges.

"Given the number of people, suppliers and moving parts involved in delivering an event, safety is a responsibility shared across every part of our industry," Brown said.

"That's why developing an evolving source of truth that the industry can turn to for practical guidance was so important," she added.

Click **HERE** to register for ABEA's webinar on BE:SAFE on 17 Nov at 12pm AEDT. *JB*

Christchurch retains the events crown

FOR a second time running, Te Pae Christchurch Convention Centre has been recognised as Oceania's leading meetings and conference centre.

Announced at the World Travel Awards Asia, Oceania & Indian Ocean Gala Ceremony in the Maldives on Sun, Te Pae Christchurch was nominated alongside ICC Sydney, Brisbane Convention & Exhibition Centre and Cairns Convention Centre.

Its general manager, Ross



Steele, credited the honour to the strength of the city's visitor economy.

Since opening in 2022, the centre has hosted over 980 events, welcoming over 447,000 delegates. *JB*

10 years of Orange

ICC Sydney is marking 10 years of serving wine from Orange at its events.

Over the past decade, the convention centre has purchased 640,000 wine bottles from the town in NSW's Central West, stimulating economic opportunities for regional wineries, as well as supporting jobs and investment both in Orange and across NSW. *JB*



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Sabre has announced the promotion of **Fiona Richards** to the role of regional director South Pacific. She has been with the Sabre team for more than 20 years, most recently as regional director, southern region and, prior to that, as commercial leader, manager sales and account management.

CT Partners has expanded its team in Australia, appointing **Natalie Brean** as its new operations coordinator and promoting **Liz Rooney** to commercial performance manager. Brean joins with extensive experience, including over two years at Air Canada and nearly 20 years at British Airways. Rooney has been with CT Partners for the past four years as commercial analyst.

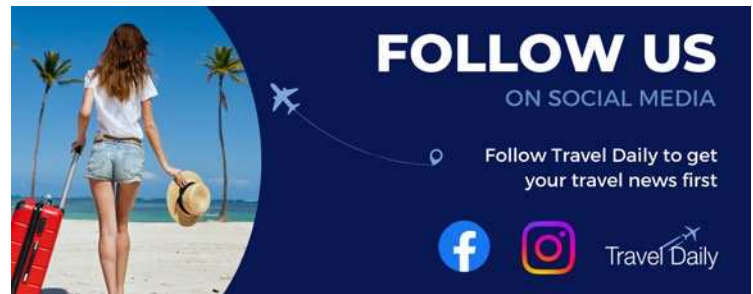
Powerhouse has appointed five members to its team. **Anthony Dennis** joins as senior counsel, most notably serving as editor for *Nine's Traveller* for over 15 years. In addition, **Cynthia Dammerer**, **Natalie Brown**, **Nicole Ford** and **Ginni Post** have joined as consultants.

Cameron Mannix has begun a new role at **Crystalbrook Collection - Cairns**, joining as account director - leisure. He joins with extensive experience in the cruise space, having led the sales team for both Royal Caribbean and Celebrity Cruises. He also served as business development manager for Celebrity for a two-year period.

TFE Hotels has appointed **Sid Singh** as area general manager NSW and general manager of Adina Darling Harbour. He has been with the team for more than 13 years, with his previous role seeing him lead multi-brand hotel operations through post-COVID recovery, in addition to overseeing major capital expenditure and compliance projects. TFE has made other key appointments including **Jay Hore**, who now oversees Adina Wollongong; **Shaarn Letele**, who has taken on the general manager role at Vibe Hotel Darling Harbour; plus Tish Nyar and Ajay Vaid, who have both had their remits expanded.

Julie McLean has been appointed to the role of director enterprise sales for **FCM Meetings & Events**. She has been with the team since Aug last year, serving as its business development manager. McLean first joined Flight Centre Travel Group in 2014, during which time she held several sales roles at FCM Travel, in addition to working as partnership development manager - loyalty.

Eden Retreat in the Gold Coast hinterland has appointed **Sophie Lorenz** as its new head of marketing. She enters the role with over a decade of experience in the luxury hospitality and tourism space, joining from Sheraton Grand Mirage Resort Gold Coast where she served as marketing manager since 2022. Prior to that, she was marketing account manager at Sunshine Coast-based Social Tap, focusing on clients in the lifestyle and hospitality space.



Accor invests in Sydney



ACCOR has signed Novotel Sydney Castle Hill, a new hotel within the Nova Reve mixed-use precinct in Sydney's north west.

Slated to open in early 2029, the property will feature 143 rooms as well as restaurants, cafes and bars, a fitness centre, a pool, and conference and events facilities.

"The signing of Novotel Sydney Castle Hill is a testament to the resilient demand for trusted, internationally recognised hospitality brands in key economic and lifestyle corridors across the Asia-Pacific region," Accor CEO, MEA APAC, Duncan O'Rourke said.

"As urban dynamics shift, integrated mixed-use precincts like Nova Reve are becoming the blueprint for modern living and travel," he added.

The Nova Reve precinct includes 253 apartments across three towers, more than 1,600m² of ground-level shops and cafes, and communal gardens.

MEANWHILE, Accor has announced the launch of ALL Concierge, its conversational AI assistant that can offer hotel ideas based on a mood or vacation

style, compare properties, and provide details such as breakfast hours or spa offerings.

The new tool, which has been in pilot mode since Jul 2025, is available on the ALL.com website in 11 languages and on the ALL Accor mobile app. *JM*

Dubai heats up

EMIRATES Holidays has signed a memorandum of understanding with the Kenya Association of Travel Agents (KATA) to stimulate tourism to Dubai and onwards across Emirates' broader network of destinations.

The partnership will see KATA's network of over 300 travel agents gain access to Emirates Holidays' portfolio of destinations, experiences and holiday packages, giving them more options for their clients.

As part of the partnership, Dubai will be positioned as a key leisure destination alongside an array of destinations in Emirates Holidays' network, including Bali, Maldives, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Hong Kong, Greece, Finland, Chile, Jamaica and Australia. *JB*

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