

Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today features seven pages of news, including our **Business Events News**, plus a full page from **Accor**.

Win a Quark cruise

TRAVEL advisors have the chance to win a Patagonia adventure, with Quark Expeditions offering one cabin aboard *Ultramarine* on its 'Essential Patagonia: Chilean Fjords and Torres del Paine' voyage, valued at \$60,000.

The trip departs Buenos Aires on 20 Mar 2027, and retraces the steps of Charles Darwin through the Beagle Channel, as guests explore Chile.

Every booking made between 01 Oct and 30 Nov this year will earn one entry into the competition, with additional entries available based on the number of passengers booked.

Eligible bookings will also be backdated to 01 Nov. *ZH*

The only event of its kind

EXCLUSIVE

BEYOND Borders represents an important opportunity for the industry to gather and discuss key topics facing the sector beyond selling and product, Australian Travel Industry Association (ATIA) CEO Dean Long has explained on the eve of its sold-out third year.

"That is why [the event] is growing, it always takes a number of years to grow and I think the fact that nearly 500 attendees are coming is testament to there being a desire for people to want to think differently," Long said.

The ATIA chief added that Beyond Borders takes attendees on a "different journey" than any other event on the calendar, with many gaining valuable insights into questions about their own business models and the role that their operations play in the wider travel ecosystem.

"We will never be a multi-thousand person event, that's

not what we aspire to be, but we want the people who want to drive the future of the industry in the room thinking about how to make it better," he said.

One example of how Beyond Borders plans to stand out from the crowd this year will be a presentation from two key executives from the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC), who will explain how it sees the forces shaping travel business and the experiences of consumers.

"There has not been a regulator talking at any conference this year discussing how the market works and why they are doing certain things," Long noted.

"When thinking about the biggest issues for people in the industry, let's get the independent umpire in to talk about [those issues] so people can make better informed decisions about their businesses."

Passports out of UK

THE UK has begun rolling out contactless eGates at airports, allowing eligible passengers to clear immigration without presenting their passport.

The system uses facial recognition to match verified immigration, travel and passport information, with tests showing up to 25% faster speeds.

Australian travellers, along with a number of other Commonwealth and EU nations, are able to use the eGates.

All UK airports are expected to be upgraded by early 2027, with passports still required until then.

UK Border Force director general Phil Douglas called the development a win for "our brilliant country". *ZH*

Coastal escapes

ACCOR is inviting event planners to escape the ordinary by hosting at one of its coastal properties - details on **page eight**.



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Virtuoso develops

VIRTUOSO has appointed Thatcher Brown in the newly-created role of chief development officer, where he will be charged with leading the development of new markets, categories and business opportunities.

Brown will report to president Brad Bourland. **AB**



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Expedia TAAP

Biggest BA upgrade in history

BRITISH Airways has unveiled the biggest cabin transformation in its history, revealing its A380 fleet will receive new interiors across all four classes.

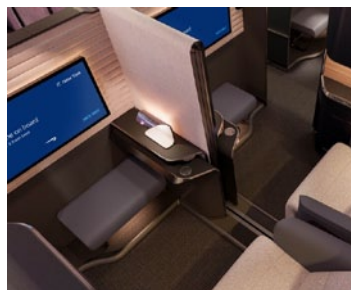
The overhaul will see the carrier's 12 A380s reconfigured from 469 seats to 421, with the number of premium seats increasing significantly.

Most notably for premium travellers, the entire upper deck of the planes will become a 106-seat Club World cabin, making it the world's largest business class cabin on an aircraft.

The new configuration will also feature 12 first class suites, as well as 84 premium economy and 215 economy seats.

BA confirmed the refurbishment program will extend to upgrading seats, galleys, stairways, inflight entertainment, bedding, amenity kits and menus.

The new first class suite features a 32-inch 4K entertainment screen, a private space with a



60-inch curved wall, integrated minibar and an ottoman that can be used for dining.

Club Suite will also receive additional storage and a broader refresh, while guests will have access to dedicated club kitchens and new lounge-style areas.

Meanwhile, economy pax will enjoy wider seats, upgraded entertainment and refreshed shared spaces.

The first refurbished A380 is expected to enter service in the coming months, with the program forming part of BA's broader investment in its long-haul customer experience. **AB**

New AmexGBT CEO

AMERICAN Express Global Business Travel (AmexGBT) president Drew Crawley has taken over from Paul Abbott as CEO as part of a leadership transition.

The change follows the business being bought by AI-focused investment firm Long Lake Management in Sep. **AB**



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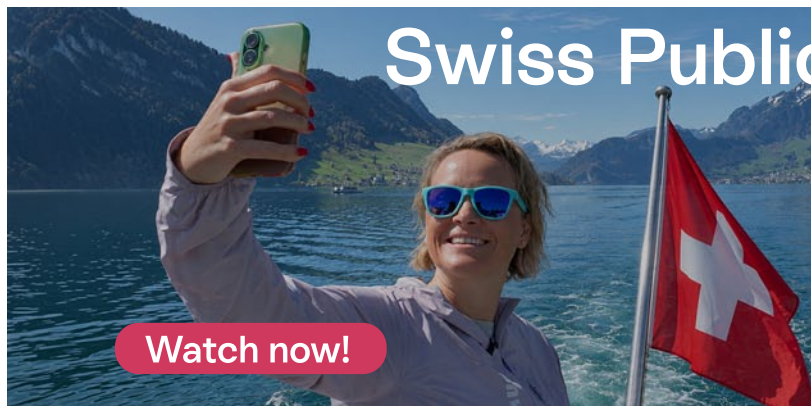
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Thursday 8th Oct 2026



Unforgettable Asia

UNFORGETTABLE Travel Company has launched Unforgettable Asia, a new luxury specialist range covering 11 destinations and 50 itineraries, aimed at simplifying complex Asian itineraries for agents.

The collection includes Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, Thailand, Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, Singapore, Malaysia, Borneo and Indonesia, with more destinations planned for late 2026 and 2027.

Its launch follows a 226% increase in Asia enquiries between 2022 and 2025, with agents now accounting for 54% of the company's Asia bookings.

Unforgettable Asia provides end-to-end trip design and operational support, including private transfers, luxury stays, expert guides, 24/7 in-destination assistance and more.

Co-founder Graham Carter said the brand will help luxury advisors navigate the complexity of Asia. ZH

1000 Mile unveils smart hub

1000 Mile Travel Group (1000MTG) has launched the latest generation of its global Advisor Hub offering a new AI-powered search that it said would simplify business for its agents around the world.

Built in Mighty Networks, a white-label platform that enables users to host their own custom online communities and digital portals, the new hub brings 1000MTG's vast range of advisor resources under one roof, and enables AI search to quickly find relevant assets and information.

"The challenge for a global advisor network is not simply having resources available; it is making them easy to find and use," 1000MTG global head of marketing Mahala Summers said.

"Independent advisors are running their own businesses, so their time is valuable, so the hub brings our resources, expertise and community together in one



place, with AI-powered search making it significantly easier to find what they need."

Other key platform features include business and professional development resources, supplier and industry information, live events and famils, regional communities, company updates and opportunities, and a global network for travel professionals to connect and share knowledge.

The hub will continue to evolve, with additional education, resources, events, and more being introduced as the platform continues to develop. ZH

AAT's big Oct earn

AAT Kings is rewarding travel agencies this Oct with its new 'Sell More, Earn More' trade incentive, offering up to \$600 in gift cards for eligible bookings.

The promotion runs until 31 Oct and applies to new Aus and NZ guided holiday bookings of five days or longer and deposited during the month for travel in 2026 or 2027.

Agencies can earn \$100 for two bookings rising to \$600 for six or more bookings. ZH

Back-Roads savings

BACK-ROADS Touring has launched a six-week campaign offering \$300pp off eligible 2027 departures booked between 07 Oct and 18 Nov.

The savings can be combined with eligible returning guest and multi-tour loyalty discounts.

Adding booking certainty, 70% of departures included in the campaign are guaranteed. ZH

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Shepherd Mayfair open

LUXURY London boutique hotel
The Shepherd Mayfair is now open in the heart of the historic Shepherd Market neighbourhood.

Set on the site of Mayfair's oldest house in the UK, the new 82-room boutique property opened to the public at the start of the week. *MS*

Half of Aussies fear wars

HALF of Australian travellers now say the risk of terrorism or armed conflicts plays an "essential role" in choosing their destination, new survey data from Redion has indicated.

The number represents the highest percentage ever recorded by the travel insurer's risk barometer, with an even higher 57% stating that wars are impacting their desire to travel more broadly - well beyond the specific destinations affected.

Among the Australians surveyed who chose not to travel at all, 9% cited safety and security concerns as the reason.

"World events are now factoring into individual decisions at a level we haven't seen before and it is reshaping not just where people go, but whether they go at all," chief executive officer for Australia and New Zealand Justin Sebire said.

"Security considerations are weighing more heavily on destination choices, with decisions increasingly shaped by risk considerations," he added.

As a result, these heightened conversations around travel safety are now starting earlier, with travellers increasingly wanting reassurance about destination risk built into the planning process.

Findings also showed that travellers are more likely to book a trip when they know plans can be easily adapted if a situation changes, while human

expert advice is also becoming increasingly valued over self-directed research online.

The 10% of people who are opting out of travel entirely represent an opportunity to sell lower-risk destinations, with the report urging the travel sector to claw back cancellations and treat the growing concern as a reshaping of destination choice.

View the full report **HERE**. *AB*

Go for gold in 2027

GOLDEN Eagle Luxury Trains has unveiled its 2027 program, adding new all-inclusive private rail journeys across Europe and Asia for Australian travellers.

The operator will introduce two new Italy itineraries, including the 12-day 'Sicilian Odyssey' from Venice and five-night 'Taste of Italy' from Taormina, alongside more European spring departures designed to take advantage of cooler weather.

Following the successful launch of its 'Silk Road Express' in 2026, Golden Eagle will offer six China departures in 2027, including the new 'Imperial China' and 'Voyage to the Roof of the World' itineraries.

Meanwhile, the Paris-Istanbul journey will also return with three new dates, while the popular Festive Collection will feature Christmas markets and New Year celebrations next year.

Journeys are all-inclusive with bookings now open. *ZH*

LA/DL pact grows

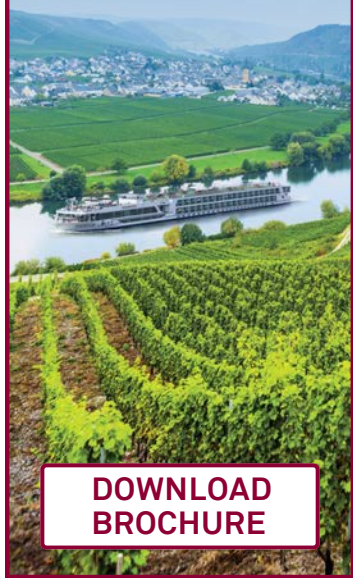
LATAM Airlines (LA) and Delta Air Lines (DL) have added nine new routes since establishing their partnership four years ago, increasing capacity between North and South America by 31%.

The two airlines have so far operated 83,000 flights as part of their joint venture. *MS*

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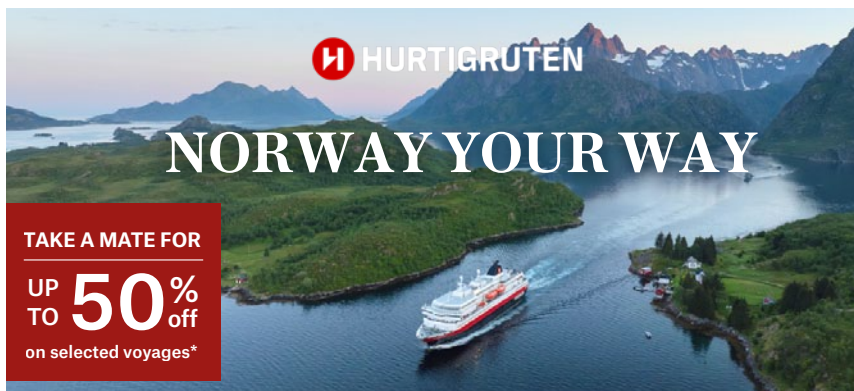
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Sunshine baggage

SUNSHINE Coast Airport has opened its new arrivals precinct and baggage claim, marking another milestone in its terminal transformation.

The new facility is almost three times larger than the previous arrivals area and features a 92-metre baggage carousel, upgraded seating and cooling.

Upgrades are set to deliver a smoother arrival for around 20,000 passengers weekly. ZH

More to disembark

AMERICAN Airlines is moving to eliminate involuntary passenger bumps on oversold flights, turning its existing “no invols” target into a company-wide mandate.

Under the new policy, gate agents will increase compensation offers and keep aircraft doors open until a passenger voluntarily accepts a later flight, according to an internal memo obtained by *View from the Wing*.

Station leaders will also be able to approve compensation above corporate limits, with American Airlines accounting for more than half of US airlines’ involuntary denied boardings in 2025.

The move forms part of a broader push to improve customer experience and attract more premium travellers, bringing American closer to Delta, Allegiant and United Airlines, which have largely removed involuntary bumping. ZH

TC members prepared



TRAVELLERS Choice has celebrated the inaugural graduates of ProAdvance, a six-month leadership program designed to prepare experienced travel professionals for agency management and ownership roles in the future.

The course combines self-paced learning with monthly Zoom masterclasses covering leadership, strategic communication, people management, innovative thinking, financial forecasting and reporting (**TD** 02 Dec 2025).

Home and Afar’s Jonty Southam (**pictured left**) said the scheme accelerated her path towards agency management, while also providing valuable connections with other emerging leaders.

“The program provided an opportunity to develop my leadership skills, but just as importantly, participation in monthly Zoom meetings helped



me connect with other travel professionals and future business leaders,” Southam said.

Villa Holiday Your Way Office and logistics manager Michelle Sorgiovanni (**pictured right**) said the course strengthened her approach to team leadership and managing challenging situations.

“I found it particularly valuable in regard to providing solutions and options for addressing the many different facets of working with a team,” Sorgiovanni said.

“But it also looked at ways to manage yourself, in the sense of ensuring you are grounded and have the confidence to deal with challenging situations”.

Panorama Cruise & Travel senior travel advisor Georgia Charlton said ProAdvance helped participants understand the shift required to move into management and welcomed the focus on sometimes overlooked experienced consultants. ZH



Window Seat

MUNICH Airport has found itself with a rather unexpected new passenger - and this one definitely was not booked by a travel agent.

Authorities in Germany are hunting for a suspected puma after the big cat was reportedly spotted near the airport in the Notzingeremoos nature reserve.

Police have launched an all-out search, with helicopters, thermal drones, ground patrols and forestry officers scouring the area for clues.

The animal was first reported by a local hunter after a wildlife camera apparently caught it on film.

Wildlife experts have told police the mystery animal could be a puma, but nobody knows where it came from.

Adding to the mystery, authorities say no local zoos, sanctuaries or travelling circuses have reported a missing big cat.

Residents have been urged to keep children and pets indoors in case the furry flier decides to extend its stay.



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AUSSIE GUIDELINES GO GLOBAL

AN AUSTRALIAN-DEVELOPED framework for neurodivergent-inclusive events is now being put into practice by one of the world's biggest trade shows, with IMEX America becoming the latest to achieve its highest level of endorsement.

Developed by the Australian Psychological Society (APS) in 2025, the Neurodivergent-Inclusive Event Guidelines provide event organisers with a roadmap for addressing sensory, communication and participation needs across the event journey.

It covers everything from pre-event communication and sensory environments to programming, staff preparation and attendee support.

Taking place 13-15 Oct in Las Vegas, IMEX America 2026 has achieved Level III Comprehensive Neurodivergent Accommodation



- the highest level available under the guidelines, showing how the framework is now being applied at major international events.

"Level III endorsement reflects a whole-of-event approach," Paula Rowntree, head of external engagement at the Australian Psychological Society, said.

"It means an organiser has considered how people receive information before they arrive, how they experience the physical environment, how the program

supports different needs and how staff can respond with confidence," she added.

"IMEX America is demonstrating that neurodivergent inclusion can sit at the centre of event design rather than being added later."

The Neurodivergent Inclusive Event Guidelines are available free to event planners, conference organisers, venue managers, suppliers and corporate event teams worldwide - access them online [HERE](#). JM

HeadBox upgrade

AI-SMART meetings and events platform HeadBox has unveiled an upgrade allowing businesses to plan, book and manage their entire MICE program in one place.

The platform remembers each booker's preferences and their company's event history, resulting in tailored recommendations.

"Our clients have always come to HeadBox to save time, and our new platform takes that even further," HeadBox Australia CEO Ali Lord said.

"It is smarter than ever, learning how each team likes to work and handling the repeatable bookings automatically," she added.

The platform is now available in 100 cities globally, including Sydney. JM

Last hurrah for Birdsville Big Red Bash

THE organisers behind the Birdsville Big Red Bash have announced their decision to close the book on the iconic festival, with its final iteration to take place in 2027.

Scheduled from 06-08 Jul, the event's farewell lineup will feature Missy Higgins, Hoodoo Gurus, The Living End, Birds of Tokyo and The Whitlams, among many others.

The Bash has welcomed more than 78,000 people to Outback

Queensland across its 13-year history, with the decision to bring it to a close made due to "ongoing outside pressures", including weather challenges and logistical demands.

The festival was cancelled this year after once-in-a-generation outback rainfall inundated the site ([TD 27 Mar 2026](#)).

Tickets for the 2027 Bash will go on sale on 12 Nov, with full refunds to be given if the event cannot proceed. JM

A first for Cairns

CAIRNS is today hosting the first internationally recognised dermoscopy conference to be held outside of the US.

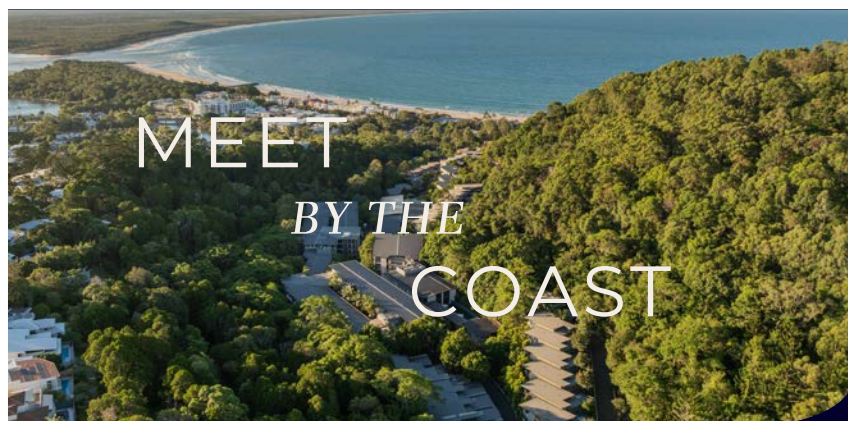
The Australasian Dermoscopy Meeting 2026, on until Sun, has attracted GPs, skin cancer doctors, dermatologists, nurses, nurse practitioners and specialists from across Australia, New Zealand, Europe, South America and the US. JM

Win a Noosa escape

TOURISM Noosa is giving one business events professional and two workmates the chance to experience Noosa firsthand through a new campaign that showcases the destination's meeting, incentives and corporate retreats offerings.

Running from 01 Oct-15 Nov, the campaign appeals to growing demand for business events that deliver more than a traditional meeting-room experience.

For more information on the competition, click [HERE](#). JM



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Qantas has promoted **Jared Sinkinson** as its new commercial manager, airports. He was previously in the role of revenue management for four years. Sinkinson also recently worked on the Qantas-American Airlines Joint Business.

Caroline Beteta has been named as **Brand USA's** interim president and CEO, effective 09 Nov. She succeeds Fred Dixon, who will depart the company on 13 Nov after more than two years at the helm. Beteta retired in Sep after nearly three decades as president and CEO of Visit California.

Flight Centre Travel Group (FCTG) has recruited **Erin Cowley** as a new business manager in its corporate executive team. Previously, Cowley was the EU service centre product lead for FCTG's corporate business, FCM Travel.

Lisa Johansen has announced her appointment as marketing manager at First Travel Group. Based in Auckland, Johansen brings extensive leadership experience across tourism and travel, including five years at MoaTrek New Zealand Tours.

Air New Zealand has tapped former New Plymouth Airport CEO **David Scott** to be its regional affairs manager. Scott oversaw the day-to-day operations of the Taranki-based airport for more than five years. His CV also includes stints at Nelson Airport and Emirates.

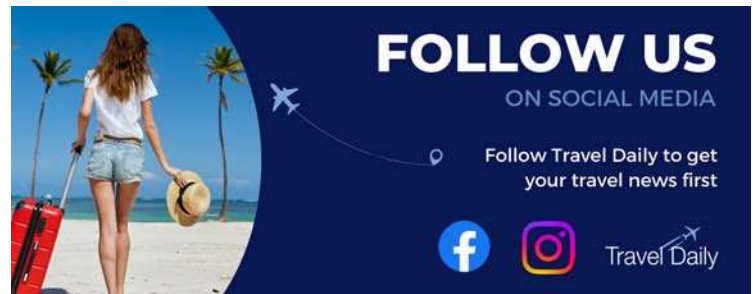
Kris Heinceslater has joined **FCM Meetings and Events** as head of group travel. Prior to this, he was a business leader at Corporate Traveller Australia for more than five years. Earlier in his career, Heinceslater was a travel consultant at Flight Centre Travel Group and Infinity Holidays.

Tourism and Events NT has promoted **Jason Potter** to the role of assistant director event operations. He will draw on more than 15 years' experience delivering events, conferences, product launches and more across a range of industries. Potter first joined the DMO last year as its senior event manager.

Anthea Somerville has announced her departure from SeaLink Marine and Tourism after 12 years at the organisation. She held the title of sales manager USA/Canada/South America, India and inbound. Somerville revealed plans to launch her own brand representation business after taking some time to recharge.

Eurowings has tapped **Matthias Spohr** as its new chief operating officer. Previously MD of Lufthansa Aviation Training GmbH, he will now be responsible for the carrier's crew, flight and ground operations.

Rochelle Boas has been elected as **Sabre's** executive vice president (EVP) - chief legal and administrative officer, effective immediately. She first joined the company in 2024 as EVP - chief legal officer.



Malta teases highlights



VISIT Malta and Emirates have showcased Mediterranean luxury around Australia recently, as part of a three-city roadshow welcoming travel trade guests.

Launching in Melbourne recently, followed by Brisbane this week and Sydney on 24 Nov, attendees have enjoyed the evenings celebrating the destination's culture, cuisine and luxury, hosted by Visit Malta director Mario Farrugia Borg (**pictured** right) and Emirates regional sales manager Leonie Brennan (**pictured** left).

During the events, Borg has discussed Malta's wealth of distinctive experiences, its 8,500-year history, rich cultural heritage, gastronomy, wellness, and island lifestyle.

"Australia remains a priority market for Malta, and our collaboration with Emirates is a fantastic opportunity to showcase the depth and diversity of the Maltese Islands and encourage more Australian travellers to experience Malta for themselves," Borg said.

Malta's long-term tourism strategy focuses on sustainability and attracting higher-value visitors looking for authentic cultural experiences, he added.

Meanwhile, Brennan shared updates on Emirates' extensive global network and the airline's connectivity to Malta via Dubai.

"We continue to see growing demand for Malta from Australian travellers through Emirates' extensive global network and seamless connections via our home of Dubai," she said. *MS*

Rotto Island buy-up

PINNACLE Travel Group has expanded its Rottneest Island portfolio with the acquisition of The Lane Cafe, Simmo's Ice Creamery and Havza.

The agreement adds three hospitality businesses to its existing Rottneest Fast Ferries and Quokka Coaches operations, with new owners declaring there are no immediate plans to change the businesses and no planned changes to management. *ZH*

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