

Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today features six pages of news, including a photo page from **Ponant** and our **Corporate Update**, plus full pages from:

- Royal Brunei Airlines
- Celebrity Cruises

Mel-Ldn with ease

DISCOVER London with Royal Brunei Airlines - just one stop from Melbourne.

Enjoy seamless connections, exceptional service and more on **page seven**.

New CruisingPower

MEET the new CruisingPower, built to help Celebrity Cruises partners run and grow their business with ease.

Learn more on **page eight**.

Tap into Trafalgar

TRAFALGAR is urging Australian and New Zealand travel agents to tap into group travel, with the global market forecast to nearly double in value by 2033.

TTC Tour Brands SVP of sales - Oceania Andrew Young said agents could unlock repeat business and higher commissions by targeting existing clients, including families, sports clubs and special-interest groups.

"Group travel isn't just about filling seats; it's about driving exponential business growth," Young said. *ZH*

ATIA unveils new data hub

THE Australian Travel Industry Association (ATIA) has launched a new website that creates a "natural home" for all of the industry body's various divisions and priorities.

Revealed at Beyond Borders in Melbourne by CEO Dean Long, the new online resource will have dedicated pages for its Independent Travel Agents Association (ITAA), as well as CATO and corporate members to name a few, so that each group can have standalone areas to access specific key information.

"If we are going to be one association, we need to create spaces and opportunities for the different segments of our membership to have the conversations that they want without the others," Long said.

"There are times to come together and there are times to be separate, and the new website is the physical approach as to how we have gone about that," he added.

ATIA has also updated its member portal, making it easier to access key resources such as its events calendar, the latest updates on A30, and current topics of interest or concern, such as its highly accessed RBA surcharge fact sheets.

Another key pillar of the new website is a commitment to ATIA's A30 pledge of democratising data and making

that information more easily available for members.

This includes the introduction of several key data dashboards to help members guide business decisions, such as a hub showing airline agency sales over different periods and markets over the last 12 months.

"This is the first time ever that you are going to have live action to all of the different markets," Long said.

Other dashboards include an aviation hub showing city pairs, the number of flights, passengers and seats on different routes.

Members who have not yet received an email from ATIA to update logins for the new page are advised to contact the body to get their profiles active. *AB*

Long to stay on

AUSTRALIAN Travel Industry Association (ATIA) CEO Dean Long has reached a new agreement with the board to extend his role for another three years.

The development was confirmed by chair Christian Hunter at Beyond Borders in Melbourne this morning.

Long was appointed CEO in 2021 on a five-year term, which marked his return to ATIA (then AFTA), having previously served for five years as national manager - strategy & policy between 2014 and 2019. *AB*

UAE, QA lowered

THE Australian Government has lowered travel advice for Qatar and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) to Level 2 (**TD** breaking news yesterday), though it continues to advise travellers to exercise a high degree of caution.

Military strikes and reprisal attacks across the Middle East could trigger further escalation, airspace closures and flight cancellations affecting major Gulf hubs, DFAT warned.

Melissa Elf, global chief operating officer of FCM Travel and Corporate Traveller, welcomed the move as a "sign of confidence" for travellers and Gulf carriers connecting Australia to Europe and beyond.

However, she stressed the situation remained unpredictable, urging travellers to keep plans flexible and check their travel policies, noting the importance of flexible fares.

"Duty of care doesn't drop with the advice level," Elf said. *ZH*

Vietjet's 10/10 sale

VIETJET has launched a three-day sale offering \$199 Eco fares and 20% off Deluxe base fares from Australia to destinations across Vietnam and beyond.

The promotion applies to travel from now until 30 Sep 2027, and includes tickets between Sydney (WSI and SYD), Melbourne, Brisbane and Perth and Ho Chi Minh City, plus all Vietjet domestic routes. *JM*



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Manager, Oceania – 2 year contract, Sydney

Singapore Tourism Board (STB) is seeking a dynamic and results-driven individual to help drive leisure and MICE arrivals and tourism receipts from WA and QLD.

Full job scope can be found [here](#)

Min. requirements:

- 5 yrs in travel trade/destination marketing
- Degree from a recognised university
- The right to work in Australia permanently



Detailed resumes to be sent to STB_Infosingapore@stb.gov.sg by 23 October 2026



Window Seat

DOLLY Parton fans can now celebrate the late country star's legacy by booking a stay at a new hotel and museum that have opened in her honour in downtown Nashville (**TD** 20 Oct 2025).

Officially opening this week, Dolly Parton's SongTeller Hotel features 240 rooms and suites and an intimate music and entertainment space inspired by Parton's hit song *Jolene*.

The adjacent Dolly's Life of Many Colors Museum takes guests through the many chapters of the singer's life and career.



AI will transform bookings

MORE than 70% of businesses will be transformed entirely by artificial intelligence in the next 15 years, according to data cited by Flight Centre Travel Group (FCTG) global leisure CEO James Kavanagh during a panel session at Beyond Borders this morning.

The FCTG executive also predicted that super intelligence would change the travel bookings process at roughly twice the speed that the internet had revolutionised the space over the last 30 years.

Kavanagh claimed that AI's increasing role in travel will not be binary, with humans and machines likely to work together to create beneficial outcomes.

"I think they are augmenting one another and are playing different roles around decisions, authority, governing, and so on, but I also do think that our industry is going to change rapidly," he forecasted.



Kavanagh also believes knowledge work will be the most disrupted area.

His advice for travel businesses is to imagine an entire step in the value chain disappearing overnight, and seeing where they can deliver a competitive advantage on the back of that change to set them apart. **AB**

Pictured: Helloworld executive director Cinzia Burnes; G Adventures managing director for ANZ Sean Martin; joint-managing director Goldman Group David Goldman; and Kavanagh on the panel.

RBA had a shocker

AUSTRALIAN Travel Industry Association (ATIA) CEO Dean Long has reiterated that the RBA has "had a shocker" on its decision around credit card surcharging.

Speaking at Beyond Borders in Melbourne this morning, the ATIA chief said the call was "absolutely made" on flawed data by the RBA payment system board.

Stoking laughter in the room, Long said that according to the RBA's own figures, only 16% of all transactions that occur in Australia attract a surcharge.

"Bad data leads to bad decisions, which leads to bad consumer outcomes, and the RBA has unfortunately had a shocker on this instance," he said.

Long also said the ban on surcharging has locked in another interest rate rise.

"Around 50% of our industry's transactions are on card and 50% are going to have to pay more."

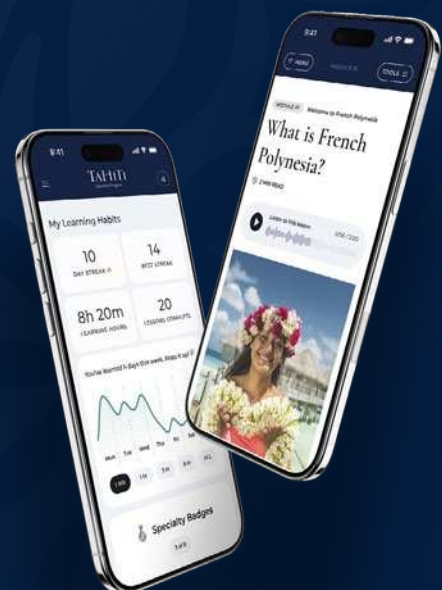
The RBA declined to attend Beyond Borders this year. **AB**

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AI & SIA strengthen

AIR India and Singapore Airlines are expanding their strategic partnership, opening up booking options across 126 weekly flights connecting Singapore with eight Indian cities from 15 Oct.

Enhanced reciprocal Maharaja Club and KrisFlyer loyalty benefits will launch Q2 2027. ZH

QR ups premium offering

QATAR Airways has reinforced its commitment to the Australian market while unveiling a refreshed premium offering spanning dining, connectivity, cocktails and onboard amenities.

Speaking at an industry event in Sydney last night, Qatar Airways SVP global marketing, sponsorship and corporate communications Babar Rahman (pictured second from the left) said the carrier's commitment to Australia remained strong after first launching services in 2009.

"Our core commitment is and will remain to serve the Australian consumer and the broader aviation community," Rahman said, also highlighting the airline's Qsuite and Starlink connectivity as key innovations. "For those who haven't experienced Starlink...it is out of this world and nothing else matches it," he continued.

New chief customer officer Calum Laming (pictured centre), who will take up the role on 01 Nov, reaffirmed that Australia continued to be an important market for the carrier.

"I've worked for a couple of very strong airlines but this one is rather special," he said.

"It really is a world-class airline and Australia is a massively important market for us."

The airline has more than 150 widebody aircraft equipped with Starlink, and over 23 million passengers have connected since its 2024 launch.



Qatar is also introducing new premium menus from Australian chef Ross Lusted from Feb to Jul 2027, developed in collaboration with his restaurant Woodcut, located at the Crown Sydney.

The new first and business class menus feature dishes such as Woodcut tiger prawns, slow-cooked lamb shoulder, roasted fish fillet and caramel roasted apple, with Lusted's approach focused on fresh local produce and refined flavour pairings.

The dining offering will be complemented by signature cocktails and mocktails from Italian mixologist Lorenzo Antinori, while first and business class passengers will also receive new Diptyque amenity kits. ZH

New Solomon fees

SOLOMON Airlines has informed trade partners that it will adjust its fees as of 12 Oct.

Adjusted fares, fuel surcharges and ancillary fees will apply on a sector-by-sector basis to all tickets issued from that date.

Increases will vary depending on the route.

Existing unticketed bookings that need to be issued before the changes should be ticketed by midnight on Sun 11 Oct to secure current rates. ZH

Nuttall's new move

SUSANNE Nuttall is moving on from her role as head of procurement for luxury brands at Flight Centre Luxury following a recent restructure, after nearly 10 years with the business.

Nuttall helped develop Luxury Travel Collection's global supply partnerships. ZH

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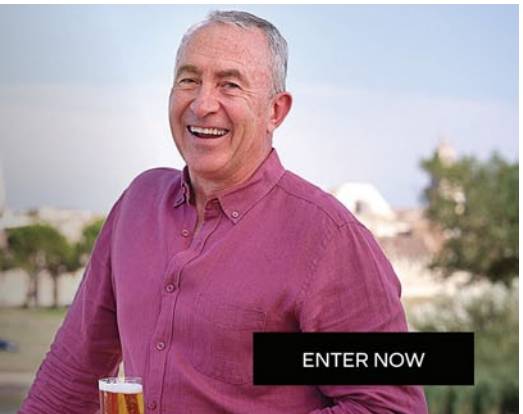
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Friday 9th October 2026

On top of the world with Ponant Explorations

PONANT Explorations director of sales APAC, Julie Rogers, recently hosted a select group of key trade partners on an exclusive expedition to the Geographic North Pole aboard the world's only luxury icebreaker, *Le Commandant Charcot*.

The journey provided firsthand insight into the company's rare expedition offering, combining exploration, comfort and discovery in one of the world's most remote regions.

A standout moment was witnessing a polar bear feeding on a walrus, a powerful reminder that polar expeditions are, at their core, a true wildlife safari.

Experiences like these cannot be replicated through training materials alone.

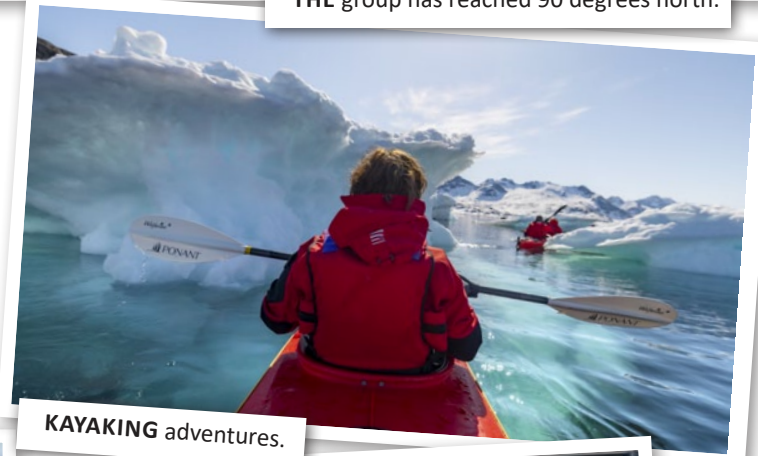
By experiencing the product firsthand, trade partners gain deeper product knowledge, more

confidence and authentic stories that help inspire clients to choose a Ponant Explorations expedition.

The group included Megan Catteral, Luxe by itravel; Ivona Siniarska, Take Off Go!; Graham Burke and Laurice Burke, Helloworld Travel Kenmore and Eatons Hill; Paul Rickard, Helloworld Travel Caloundra; Vidit Taneja and Savi Munjal, Bruised Passports India; Cristina Cuesta and Matt McMillan, Eclipse Travel.



THE group has reached 90 degrees north.



KAYAKING adventures.



CELEBRATING with Ponant crew on White Night Garcia: Graham & Laurice Burke, Paul Rickard and Jules Rogers.



HIKING and exploring Svalbard.



A RARE sighting of an Arctic fox in Svalbard.



STARLINK wi-fi means connection even at the top of the world.



THE group enjoyed a private cocktail party with Captain Etienne Garcia.

AN EXCLUSIVE moment: guests held hands to run a lap 'around the world'.



CORPORATE UPDATE

WA a corporate gold mine

WESTERN Australia is gaining ground as a key corporate travel destination, new booking data from FCM Travel has revealed.

Flights into Perth, the Goldfields and regional WA soared during the first half of 2026, with Broome-Perth leading the way, up 43%, closely followed by Kalgoorlie-Perth, up 43%.

Adelaide also emerged as a standout, with Adelaide-Melbourne travel rising 24%, while routes linking Brisbane, Melbourne and Adelaide to Perth all enjoyed solid growth.

Meanwhile, the 'Golden Triangle' saw weakened demand, with Brisbane-Melbourne falling by around 7% year-on-year, while Melbourne-Sydney travel dropped around 4% and Brisbane-Sydney was down 2%.

FCM Travel attributed the shift to a mining boom in the west, with gold exploration spending in WA recently hitting its highest level since records began in 1988.

"For years, the Golden Triangle has carried the bulk of corporate travel because that is where the head offices, meetings and deals



were," Renos Rologas, GM of FCM Travel ANZ, said.

"Although the Golden Triangle remains strong in volume, this half, Western Australia showed that it is a genuine contender.

"Business is following opportunity, not habit, and right now that opportunity is sitting in the ground out west," he added, pointing out that mining, oil and gas has now overtaken government and not-for-profit travel to become FCM's most-booked sector nationally. *JM*

AA is seeing stars

AMERICAN Airlines has announced it will bring Starlink to all its mainline aircraft, including Airbus narrowbodies and Boeing narrowbodies and widebodies.

Installations will begin early next year, providing customers with fast, reliable internet.

The extended rollout follows AA's announcement last May that it will install Starlink on more than 500 Airbus aircraft (*TD* 27 May 2026).

Meanwhile, the US carrier has also revealed plans to open the largest Admirals Club lounge in its network at Charlotte Douglas International Airport in North Carolina, with construction set to begin this year.

The lounge will span more than 3,700m², with distinct zones. *JM*

Duetto doubles up

HOSPITALITY revenue management system Duetto has acquired FLYR Hospitality, a provider of automated revenue management and business intelligence for hotels.

The move expands Duetto's offering to include FLYR Hospitality's AI-first revenue strategy platform, helping to give hoteliers "the full picture of their commercial performance and the tools to act on it". *JM*



Travel Daily

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Lounge in luxe at BKK



PLAZA Premium Group (PPG) recently celebrated the opening of Plaza Premium First and Plaza Premium Lounge at Bangkok Suvarnabhumi Airport (BKK).

Located airside on Concourse G, both lounges cater to two distinct culinary and hospitality experiences across 790m².

Plaza Premium First offers an intimate, highly personalised environment featuring private lounge bays, shower suites and dedicated concierge assistance.

With a capacity for more than 50 guests, the venue offers Primo Dining - an a la carte concept featuring Thai specialties - and Aero Bar, offering fine spirits, wine and original cocktails.

Meanwhile, the Plaza Premium Lounge is centred on comfort and convenience, and can cater for up to 98 guests.

The lounge features a live kitchen and buffet serving freshly prepared som tam, gai ping skewers, and luk chup sweets, while amenities include high-speed wi-fi, recharge stations,

shower suites, a multi-faith room and family facilities.

Both PPG venues showcase curated works by contemporary Thai artists, including custom silk embroidery and glass mosaics.

"Thailand remains one of Southeast Asia's primary aviation and tourism gateways, making Suvarnabhumi Airport a natural home for our flagship dual-lounge launch," Song Hoi-See, founder and CEO of PPG, said.

"Bringing this concept to Bangkok allows us to offer travellers a distinct sense of place through authentic Thai flavours and art, while setting a new regional standard for choice, flexibility, and high-quality hospitality."

The new lounges are available for passengers travelling internationally or transferring flights, regardless of which airline they are flying with or class of service.

Prior reservations are not needed, however bookings can be made in advance. *JM*

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Back-Roads Touring is offering \$300 savings per person on 2027 tours, with 70% of sale departures guaranteed. Travellers can secure the discount when they book by 18 Nov, with the saving also combinable with eligible returning guest discounts. Contact your local BDM for details.

Travellers can enjoy discounted airfares with **Singapore Airlines**, which has just launched its earlybird promotion. The cheaper flights are available across Europe, Asia, Africa, America and beyond for departures in 2027. Bookings must be made by 29 Oct - find out more [HERE](#).

Just You is offering savings on last-minute 2026 tours, including a Sri Lankan sojourn, a journey through Jordan and an immersion in India. For instance, travellers can save \$500 on the eight-day 'Jordan - a Land of Ancient Treasures and Empires' tour, which is scheduled to depart 02 Nov 2026. For more information, click [HERE](#).

Available to book until 30 Oct, **Qatar Airways** has launched exclusive fares from Australia to popular European destinations, including London, Paris, Rome, Athens, and more. Valid for travel from 17 Jan-31 Oct 2027. Visit the carrier's website [HERE](#) to find out more.

AAT Kings has released a new selection of savings on guided holidays departing this Nov, spanning Australia and New Zealand. The 'Remarkable Adelaide to Kangaroo Island' itinerary is included in the sale, now priced at \$2,933pp down from \$3,450pp. T&Cs apply - see all the deals [HERE](#).

Aussies can save £100 per couple (approx. A\$189) on any of **On Foot Holidays'** baggage-free, self-guided, inn-to-inn walks in locations across Europe. The discount applies to bookings made by 30 Nov 2026 for travel before 31 Dec 2027. Use code 'INTRO50' when booking. For more information, click [HERE](#).

Cebu Pacific has launched its '10.10 Super Seat Sale', with one-way all-in fares from Sydney and Melbourne to the Philippines from just \$308. Running until 14 Oct, the sale covers travel from 01 Feb to 30 Jun 2027. Click [HERE](#) for further details.

Ahead of its debut later this year, Australia's first Andaz hotel, **Andaz Gold Coast**, has launched two new opening offers. Guests can enjoy 20% off room rates and complimentary breakfast, with rates from \$359 (see [HERE](#)), while the 'Gold Coast Escape' package includes a \$100 daily dining and drinking credit and complimentary room upgrade for stays of two nights or more, from \$449 per night (see [HERE](#)).

Outback Spirit is offering free return flights on its 2027 tours when booked by 18 Dec. There are also additional discounts available on selected tours, including the 15-day 'Jewels of the Kimberley and Faraway Bay' from Broome to Darwin. Couples can save up to \$1,310 on the itinerary, including free return flights. Agents can book [HERE](#).

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More training for travel



VFS Global Academy has launched a Sydney training centre in partnership with Wellington Education Group (WEG), targeting workforce development across travel, tourism, hospitality and customer service.

The launch was marked by a ceremony at Sydney Town Hall, where the organisations signed a Memorandum of Understanding.

WEG will support student recruitment, provide online learning platforms and training infrastructure, and promote the programs in Australia.

VFS global head of education, skilling & mobility Amit Saincher (pictured fourth from right) said the academy assists in equipping students and young professionals with skills valued sector-wide.

"The launch of VFS Global Academy in Sydney represents an important step in our mission to create globally connected learning opportunities that bridge education and industry," he said.

"Together, we are building pathways that support employability, industry readiness and long-term career growth,"

Saincher added.

The programs will develop technical and soft skills for customer-facing roles, helping learners meet the demands of international workplaces.

The launch supports VFS Global Academy's broader workforce development strategy, strengthening industry skills across travel and hospitality. *ZH*

PNG wants Aussies

AIR Niugini (AN) CEO Alan Milne has revealed the carrier is aiming to get Australian travellers to stay longer in Papua New Guinea, *Exepreneur* reported.

Milne said he wants visitors from Australia's east coast to stay two or three days rather than two or three hours at Port Moresby before they connect on to Tokyo, Manila, Hong Kong and Singapore.

He also revealed plans to reduce the Papua New Guinea carrier's fleet from seven aircraft types to three, with new Airbus A220s replacing Fokkers, plus plans for turboprop, 737 and 767 replacements in the pipeline. *ZH*



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