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Today's issue of TD

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

- Paul Gauguin Cruises
- Bunnik Tours
- Scenic

W360 goes Iconic

FLIGHT Centre Travel Group (FCTG) has made The Iconic its first flagship retailer for its rewards program World360 and is offering a bonus of six points per dollar spent with the brand.

The offer will run until 21 Oct before moving to four points per dollar spent.

"Teaming up with The Iconic...is a massive win for our members," executive general manager Clinton Hearne said. ZH

Depth & disconnection

NEXT year will be the era of the 'deliberate traveller', as Australians seek experiences that focus on cultural discovery and greater value, according to Skyscanner's annual *Travel Trends* 2027 report.

As a result, disconnection is a priority, with 57% admitting they would feel more present if they went off-grid while on holiday.

Meanwhile, experience-based activities are on the rise, such as the growth in history-led trips, as 29% revealed that their plans had been inspired by a historic event



or classical civilisation story.

Music buffs are also hitting the road, with an increase in trips to Rio Carnival (+108%), Baranquilla Carnival (58%) and Mardi Gras in New Orleans (+51%).

Aussies are still cost-conscious, as 42% said they check a destination's currency strength before booking a trip and nearly 31% said they had switched plans due to better exchange rates.

"Aussies are seeking deeper connections, lasting personal fulfilment, and better value from every journey," said Skyscanner travel expert Jarrod Kris. JHM

Say 'hola' to Spain

WIN a spot on an agent fam to Spain thanks to Bunnik Tours.

Find out all the details of the incentive on **page nine**.

Aussie Specialist Program Trainer

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Rex suspends OAG

REX has confirmed it will suspend its Sydney to Orange service from 25 Oct while also pausing its Port Macquarie-Sydney service, citing high fuel costs as a factor.

In Jun, the embattled regional carrier said it was cutting back on its Orange services for an eight-week period (**TD** 16 Jun).

A Rex spokesperson said affected pax will be contacted. ZH

Be early with Scenic

SUPER earlybird offers for Scenic Luxury Cruises & Tours' European river itineraries end on 31 Oct - see **page 10**.

Magic of Colombia

AMAWATERWAYS will launch six-day Machu Picchu post-cruise extension on select 'Magic of Colombia' sailings from Apr 2027.

The extension will be available on all departures of the itinerary from 2028. ZH

Tahiti temptation

BE TEMPTED by Tahiti with Paul Gauguin Cruises thanks to the cruise line's latest travel advisor incentive - more on **page eight**.

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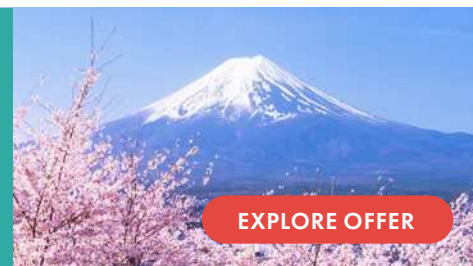
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Wednesday 14th Oct 2026



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Expedia TAAP

Fuel costs spike VA fares

VIRGIN Australia has revealed fare increases in response to rising fuel prices in an update to Aussie travel agents.

In a note seen by the *AFR*, the carrier told advisors that it would make fare adjustments in order to reflect higher costs.

"As we foreshadowed in our FY26 results announcement, costs across the aviation sector continue to rise at a rate well ahead of national inflation," the note read.

Higher fuel expenses are adding pressure to airlines' operating costs as they balance fare affordability with the need to protect margins.

Virgin Australia recorded a fuel and oil bill of \$1.09 billion in FY26, making it one of the airline's largest operating costs.

The carrier's Apr 2026 market update noted that higher jet fuel prices were expected to add \$30-40 million to second-half costs, with fuel hedging and adjustments to pricing and capacity identified as key strategies to mitigate the impact.

An ACCC report on domestic airline competition released



last month estimated Virgin Australia's fuel bill would reach \$700 million in the first half of FY27, compared with an estimated \$3.6 billion for Qantas over the same period.

The report also forecast a 3% decline in Virgin Australia's domestic capacity, noting both airlines intended to use higher unit revenue to partly offset rising fuel costs. *ZH*

Ponant 2028/29

PONANT has announced its 2028/29 season, which will feature 12 expedition itineraries.

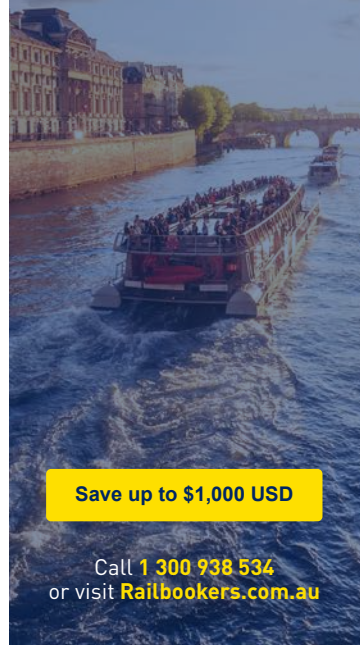
The program will see the cruise line return to Antarctica, where it will operate voyages in alliance with Smithsonian Journeys and The Explorers Club, with itineraries between 10-59 nights.

There will be 30 departures in total, including the 59-night grand itinerary around Antarctica, sailed in two halves, with a night in Hobart in-between. *MS*

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Emirates marks 30 years in Australia

EMIRATES celebrated 30 years of flying to Australia last night at a gala dinner hosted at the Victoria State Library.

The dinner, emceed by television presenter Eddie McGuire, celebrated the airline's contribution to Australia.

Emirates flew its first Australian service to Melbourne in 1996, and has since increased to 70 weekly services across five cities around the country.

The airline started with three weekly flights from Melbourne to Dubai, and now flies thrice daily between the two cities, all on an Airbus A380.

It expanded to Sydney in 2000, Perth in 2002, Brisbane in 2003, and Adelaide in 2012, carrying more than 40 million passengers between Australia and Dubai in that time, connecting to nearly 140 destinations worldwide.

The milestone also highlighted Emirates' local economic



contribution, which includes more than \$230 million invested in sport, culture, and the local community, as well as \$1.1 billion in annual operational spend and more than 8,000 Australians employed across the company.

Divisional vice president Barry Brown told attendees at the dinner that Melbourne remains central to all of Emirates' business in Australia.

"Our commitment here has never been limited to the flights we operate...we have invested

in Australian sport, culture and communities, strengthened trade links and created thousands of jobs across the country.

"These investments underline the long-term view we have always taken of this market.

"We will continue to bring our latest aircraft, our best products and our extensive global network to Australian travellers, as we have done since our first flight in 1996," he added. *MS*

Brown is **pictured** with regional sales manager Dean Cleaver.

Track your sale data

TRAVELOGIX has relaunched its airline incentive management platform, Farecast 2.0, giving travel management companies (TMCs), agency groups and consortia real-time visibility into airline incentive performance.

The re-engineered platform combines booking and ticket data with forecasting, scenario modelling and automated alerts to help commercial teams identify whether promotions are on track and take action before targets are missed.

Deals are categorised as ahead, on track, at risk, or achieved, while analytics provide an independent evidence base for supplier negotiations.

"We're helping TMCs understand where a deal is heading, whether the current pace is enough to meet the target, and what action can still be taken to influence the outcome," Travelogix founder and CEO Chris Lewis said. *ZH*

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*Sale ends 11.59pm (AEDT) 19 October 2026, unless sold out prior. Select routes, travel dates and conditions apply.



Wednesday 14th Oct 2026

[Click here to register](#)



Ladies Who Travel: 32K and counting

EXCLUSIVE

LADIES Who Travel (LWT) has grown to more than 32,000 women globally, with founder Melissa Delaware (pictured right) attributing the expansion to a rising demand for travel communities that address loneliness, safety and confidence.

What began as a Facebook community last year has developed into LWT Connect, a membership platform offering identity checks, local groups, events and tools to find travel companions.

It also runs meet-ups and organised trips to destinations including Greece, Morocco, Mongolia, Antarctica and the Five Stans, with Delaware stating many women wanted to travel but lacked someone to go with.

"Their partner might not enjoy travelling, their friends might have different interests or budgets, or their circumstances



may have changed...having that desire, but no one to share it with, can hold people back," Delaware told **Travel Daily**.

The community remains predominantly for women over 50, with its largest age group being 55 to 64, though it welcomes all adult women.

Delaware said members ranged from first-time international travellers to experienced travellers, and that the group's role often extended beyond finding a travel companion.

"Ultimately, I want our trips to reflect what members are

excited about, with a good balance between exploring the destination and enjoying the experience together," she said.

"Travel might be what initially attracts a woman to the group, but friendship and confidence can become just as important once she is involved."

Delaware, who operates through Mind & Body Travel and the Envoyage network, said in-person connection had been central to the group's growth since its first meet-up, when the Facebook group only had about 1,000 members.

"It was when women started meeting in person that the community really took off," Delaware said.

"The aim has always been to make it easier for women to connect and take part, whether that's a coffee close to home or an adventure on the other side of the world." ZH



Window Seat

A TOURIST in Bali has learned the hard way that some creepy-crawlies are best left to pest control, after allegedly using fire to evict an unwanted eight-legged guest from his bathroom.

Gaorap Rana, 45, reportedly lit a piece of paper to scare away a spider at his North Kuta villa, but strong winds carried the burning paper onto the property's thatched roof.

Within minutes, the \$160,000 villa was engulfed in flames and destroyed.

Thankfully, Rana escaped the villa unharmed, albeit a little embarrassed.

With no shortage of Havaianas on the island of Bali, we're sure there could have been a more suitable option. ZH

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Chains propelled by AI

CHAIN hotels accounted for almost three-quarters of accommodation recommendations made by seven major AI platforms across 11 Australian destinations, according to research from independent research company AI See You.

The Sep 2026 study submitted 713 hotel questions to ChatGPT, Claude, Gemini, Perplexity, Microsoft Copilot, Google AI Mode and Google AI Overviews, covering family, luxury, budget, boutique, romantic, wellness and accessible stays and more.

Across 770 top 10 rankings, chain-affiliated hotels secured 559 places (73%), compared with 207 for independent properties.

Sydney recorded the strongest showing for chains, which claimed 68 of its 70 ranked places, while the Hunter Valley was the only destination where independents led, accounting for 44 of 70 places.

The research also revealed

significant differences between platforms, with all seven agreeing on the same top hotel in just four of 77 destination and accommodation-type rankings.

Family and accessible stays presented particular inconsistencies, with no two platforms producing matching top five lists for family accommodation.

AI See You founder and chief executive officer David Willey said the findings highlighted how travellers could receive different recommendations depending on which platform they used.

"When someone asks AI where to stay, the answer depends on which AI they ask.

"What stood out in Sep was how often chains rose to the top," Willey added.

The full destination rankings are available at ai-seeyou.com/recommendations/australia. ZH

Save on APT in '27

APT Travel Group has launched two limited-time sales with discounts on selected 2027 departures across APT and Travelmarvel running from 08-28 Oct or until sold out.

APT'S 'Discover the World Sale' offers savings of up to \$2,800 per couple on its 15-day 'Kimberley Complete' itinerary, while Travelmarvel's 'Freedom to Explore Sale' features savings of up to \$3,600 per couple on its 15-day 'European Gems' journey. ZH

Mauritius curfew

THE Government of Mauritius has implemented a curfew set to lift at 6am local time on Wed following widespread civil unrest after a police shooting earlier this week.

Protesters have burnt tyres and blocked roads in response to the shooting with police deployed to manage affected areas.

PM Navin Ramgoolam will reassess the situation on Wed. ZH

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Visitation rebound

SHORT-TERM visitor arrivals to Australia edged up 0.3% year-on-year to 755,530 trips in Aug, recovering from Jul's 4.3% decline, while resident returns remained higher annually despite easing from Jul's peak.

ABS data recorded 1.82 million total arrivals and 1.83 million departures in Aug.

Short-term resident returns rose 1.5% to 986,250, down from 1.25 million in Jul, when they increased 3.8% year-on-year.

New Zealand remained Australia's largest visitor source market, with 110,210 arrivals, followed by China (106,990) and Japan (62,600).

Victoria recorded 2.3% growth in visitor arrivals, while Tasmania fell 8%.

Across other markets, South Australia grew 3.9% and the Northern Territory 6.5%, while New South Wales slipped 1%.

Overall, visitor arrivals around the nation remained 4.3% below Aug 2019 levels.

Overseas trips by Australian residents remained popular, with Indonesia the leading destination, accounting for 178,830 returns, followed by NZ at 120,830.

Resident returns were 5.9% above pre-pandemic levels. ZH



TRAVELDAILY
ON LOCATION

Amsterdam

Today's issue of *Travel Daily* is coming to you from Amsterdam, where Viking Cruises will name seven river ships this week.

AMSTERDAM is a key port for Viking, serving as a key hub for both river and ocean itineraries.

The new *Viking Rota* and *Viking Haki* are docked in the heart of the city, in easy walking distance of the shopping area.

Viking's ocean ships also call here on a range of voyages taking in iconic locations across Northern Europe.

Shore excursions on offer take in Amsterdam's rich history, architecture and art, including cultural walks, panoramic garden tours and picturesque Dutch windmills.

There are also amazing troves of art on offer at the Van Gogh Museum, featuring the world's largest collection of the famed artist, and the national Rijksmuseum, which showcases major works by Vermeer and Rembrandt.

No visit to Amsterdam is complete without a tour of the city's canals, as well as De Wallen, the unique medieval city centre which is now the red light district offering "coffee houses" where cannabis consumption is legalised.

AVALON WATERWAYS

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W Brisbane exchange

W BRISBANE has launched W Exchange, which will see the property collaborate with its sister hotel W Osaka to bring Japanese hospitality Down Under.

The concept will include W Brisbane hosting an exclusive residency by Tokyo's famous underground speakeasy Janai Coffee, led by celebrated head bartender Kento Mukai, and a Four Hands' culinary collaboration at the hotel's restaurant The Lex featuring W Osaka's acclaimed head chef Yoshiaki Hayami. *MS*



LTC HOSTS PHO-NOMENAL VIETNAM FAMIL

THE Luxury Travel Collection (LTC) recently hosted a Vietnam immersion famil with Wide Eyed Tours, with the local DMC's expertise helping the network's travel advisors connect more deeply with the destination.

The 'Vietnam Masters of Luxury Immersion' took advisors from Hanoi through Lan Ha Bay, Hue and Hoi An.

Guests stayed at properties such as the Fairmont Hanoi, Azerai La Residence Hue and Namia River Retreat - Wellness Inclusive Resort Hoi An, with an overnight cruise aboard *Bhaya Soul*.

They enjoyed experiences including a vintage military jeep tour through Hanoi's backstreets, a scooter tour through Hue's countryside, and a basket boat ride, market visit and cooking class in Hoi An.



"Luxury clients want a journey that feels like their own, but they also want confidence that someone knowledgeable is looking after the details," LTC head of events & Immersion Program Lisa Wright said.

"This immersion let our members experience both sides of that promise."

"[Guests] came home with a deeper understanding of Vietnam and a clear view of the care their clients can expect on the ground."

The Masters of Luxury Immersion Program forms part of LTC's investment in advisor education, bringing members together with trusted partners in popular destinations. *MS*

Peninsula LDN arts up

THE Peninsula London has partnered with CART Department to present 'A World Within', bringing together contemporary art and automotive excellence in the hotel's first-ever art fleet.

Running throughout the month of Oct, the initiative includes works commissioned by NYC artist KOZO and features British pastoral landscapes applied to six of the hotel's signature vehicles: two Rolls-Royces, Phantom VIII Series II EWBs, a Bentley Bentayga, an electrified Austin Taxi, a BMW i7 and a LEVC. *ZH*

Aman unveils private jet journeys in 2028

AMAN has unveiled its 2028 collection of Private Jet Expeditions in partnership with Remote Lands.

The collection features five journeys across Asia, Europe and the Middle East, which are limited to just 16-18 guests.

Each expedition combines stays at Aman's renowned sanctuaries with private air transfers as well as exclusive cultural experiences.

The 2028 collection introduces



two new itineraries: 'Cultural Treasures of Asia' (04-19 Mar), a 15-night journey through Japan, Cambodia, China, Bhutan and India; and 'From Islands to Ancient Worlds' (04-21 Oct), a 17-night expedition spanning eight destinations. *MS*

Some Minor news

MINOR Hotels has announced its Moroccan debut with the signing of Anantara Retreat Rabat, a 38-key luxury retreat in the country's capital anticipated to open in 2030.

Anantara Retreat Rabat is set within the city's diplomatic area, around 20 minutes from downtown.

The hotel is being developed in partnership with Bloom Holding, a UAE-based real estate developer.

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ACCOMMODATION

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Harbour Rocks Hotel in Sydney has reopened after undergoing a complete transformation. The heritage-listed boutique hotel features a renewed colour palette, while original brick and stonework sit alongside new furnishings, lighting and contemporary comforts. Guests can enjoy a reinvigorated dining offering, headlined by signature restaurant Tayim, bringing together modern and traditional Levantine influences with an Australian approach.



Anantara has unveiled its first safari property in Africa, **Anantara Tented Camp Kafue River**. The 13-camp off-the-grid sanctuary is located along the Kafue River in Zambia's largest national park, featuring three 110m² Horizon Terrace Suites that are suspended 14.3 metres above the ground, as well as nine 115m² Pool and Bush Villas rising 3.5 metres above the ground. There is also a 400m² Presidential Villa designed for poolside entertaining.



Outrigger Waikiki Beach Resort has opened bookings for its all-new guestrooms, marking the first milestone of the property's \$110 million transformation. The accommodation features a soft palette of sun-washed woods and pastels inspired by the surf, sky and sunset light, with woven-basket screens replacing solid walls and custom murals adorning them. Work continues on the resort's public spaces, pool area and Voyager 47 Club Lounge.



Amankora has announced the reopening of its Paro and Punakha Lodges in Bhutan, which now offer fully refreshed suites, reimagined social spaces and wellness experiences. Amankora Paro now includes Spa House, which features a private hammam, double treatment room, heated pool and a Jacuzzi, while Punakha Lodge boasts a refreshed library, media room, lounge and more.



Rimrock Banff, Emblems Collection has opened in Banff National Park, marking the North American debut of Accor's curated luxury collection. Offering a gateway to the Canadian Rockies, the resort comprises of 320 guestrooms, featuring 57 suites, including a two-bedroom suite with a wraparound terrace complete with a barrel sauna, fire table and panoramic views.

LXR debuts in India



LXR Hotels & Resorts has debuted in India with **The Den Bengaluru (pictured)**, which recently opened in the city's Whitefield neighbourhood.

Featuring 226 guestrooms, the **The Den** is complemented by four dining venues, a rooftop restaurant called Layla, a spa, an outdoor pool, and around 2,000m² of event space.

Guestrooms, studios, and suites are designed to be suited to business travel, leisure, and extended stays.

The hotel also features two signature programs designed to encourage connections with the destination, including 'The Pause Program', focusing on restorative rituals throughout the guest journey, such as calming arrival experiences, curated sleep amenities, and a number of culinary offerings.

There is also 'Whitefield Unscripted', which invites guests to explore the neighbourhood's rich heritage and local culture through curated experiences, including the Whitefield Verandah Trail and a number of immersive

farm-to-table experiences.

"India is one of Hilton's most important growth markets, and the emerging expectations of the country's luxury traveller are creating significant opportunity for brands that offer individual and experience-led stays," senior vice president & regional head South Asia Zubin Saxena said.

"Bengaluru is a natural market for this next phase of growth as it is globally connected, culturally dynamic and home to a diverse community of travellers." *MS*

WSI duty-free plan

WESTERN Sydney International Airport (WSI) will open with 11 retail stores managed by Lagardere AWPL, including duty-free shopping, EyeLove eyewear, Tech2Go technology and three Relay travel essentials outlets.

The 3,100m² retail precinct will serve both domestic and international passengers when flights begin on 25 Oct, with additional stores and brands expected to join as services and passenger demand grow. *ZH*

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*US\$1,000 (Paul Gauguin) and EUR1,000 (PONANT) shipboard credit offers are based on double occupancy and valid for new bookings only, made between 1 September and 31 October 2026 (US\$500 / EUR500 for single use of cabin); offers are combinable with Bonus/Early Booking Savings, PONANT Yacht Club Savings, Consortia Amenity Programs, Onboard Savings, Referral offer and roadshow special offer, but not combinable with free or reduced solo supplement or any other offer. Paul Gauguin offer valid on all 2026 & 2027 departures; PONANT offer valid on Le Jacques Cartier French Polynesia 2026 & 2027 select cruises only. Full terms and conditions available at au.ponant.com/tempting-tahiti-2026. Travel agents earn a \$200 gift card for every guest booked and deposited on the Tempting Tahiti offer between 1 September and 31 October 2026, dispatched by 30 November 2026 after validation.

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