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Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today features eight pages of industry news, a cover wrap from **AmaWaterways**, and including our **Business Events News**, plus full pages from:

- **Luxury Escapes**
- **Cruise Lines International Association**

Ennismore Pac chief

LIFESTYLE-FOCUSED

hospitality business Ennismore has appointed Llewellyn Wyeth as vice president of operations, Pacific as it looks to spearhead further regional growth.

Based in Melbourne, Wyeth will provide strategic and operational leadership across the Pacific network, working closely with GMs, owners and hotel leadership teams to improve sales and guest performance.

Most recently, Wyeth served as area GM for Accor's SA portfolio, and before that was regional GM for WA and regional director of sales for Vic, Tas and SA. **AB**

Book with LE today

BOOK tours and earn your own with Luxury Escapes' Agent Hub.

Read more details on **page nine** of today's *Travel Daily*.

Nominate at the CLIAs

NOMINATIONS are now open for the 24th annual Cruise Industry Awards - nomination information is available on **p10**.

Cruise goes smaller

AUSTRALIAN Mediterranean wholesaler Sun Island Tours has launched Cruise Smaller, a specialist brand and online marketplace dedicated to small-ship cruising and private yacht charters around the world.

Founded by Sun Island Tours co-owners John and Paul Polyviou (pictured), the new brand builds on the company's 35 years of experience in the travel industry and its reputation as a specialist in small-ship cruising throughout Croatia, Greece and Italy.

The platform has been custom-built from scratch, allowing advisors to search and compare a variety of cruising experiences in one marketplace, with advanced filters in place by destination, departure date, cruise style, and vessel size.

"One of the biggest challenges with small-ship cruising is that there are so many fantastic operators around the world, but finding and comparing their products can be time-consuming," Paul Polyviou said.

The business said that it was responding to trends that showed Aussies are increasingly seeking alternatives to traditional large-ship cruising, with many consumers now looking to book more intimate experiences at sea.

"We recognised an opportunity to bring together this growing segment of the cruise market under one dedicated brand, making it easier for travel agents to discover and sell small-ship



cruises," John Polyviou said.

"Small-ship cruising has always been a significant part of our business - particularly throughout the Mediterranean - and over the years, we have seen increased interest from travellers wanting...smaller vessels, unique destinations, fewer passengers and a much more personalised experience." **AB**

Sell your way to Ama

SELL, engage, and earn your way on board AmaWaterways' River of Rewards mega fam on the Mekong - see the **cover page**.

Velocity fuel tick

THE ACCC has given the final green light for 7-Eleven and Virgin Australia's Velocity program to push ahead with a loyalty partnership, allowing members to earn points when they make eligible purchases from stores.

Authorisation was sought for five years but on final approval was granted a 10-year deal taking the agreement through to 2036.

Interim authorisation was announced to much fanfare in 2021 (**TD** 28 May 2021). **AB**

Carnival FunPacks

AVAILABLE for a limited time, Carnival Cruise Line has launched FunPacks, combining a unique mix of popular add-ons.

These include wi-fi, beverages, shore excursions, specialty dining, and savings on spa and photos all bundled into one pre-cruise purchase, saving guests between 30-50% compared with buying items individually.

See more details **HERE**. **AB**

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CANADA

05 NOV 2026

10.00-11.30AM **LIVE**

Thursday 15th Oct 2026

Biggest outlay in 30 yrs

DELTA Air Lines has unveiled the largest investment in its Delta One experience from Australia in nearly 30 years, announcing a range of enhancements for business class passengers.

These include a refreshed menu of premium classics, such as wagyu beef burgers, Hong Kong-style sea bass and Champagne Taittinger sorbet pairings.

The elevated dining will be matched with higher quality tableware and a suite of added meal pre-selection options.

These include gluten-free meals, and entrees now available 18 hours before departures.

Delta has also invested more heavily in its wine selections for business class guests, partnering with sommelier Andrea Robinson to offer Napa favourites, global staples and an extended line of its Champagne Taittinger offering.

Beyond improving the cabin experiences for One Delta



members, the US carrier confirmed travellers from Sydney to LAX will save 25 minutes on US connections with a new seamless bag service launching this week.

Only available at this stage from Sydney with Melbourne and Brisbane services to follow soon, Delta's new baggage transfer service eliminates the need to claim and re-check luggage at LAX when making onward US flights.

Using advanced X-ray screening, bags are now screened in Sydney and reviewed by US customs before the flight lands.

While the time-saver is not in action yet on MEL and BNE direct flights to LAX, it is on offer to those connecting to Sydney from other Aussie hubs first. **AB**



NSW is experienced

DESTINATION NSW is targeting experience-led travel, with distinctive accommodation, multigenerational holidays and lesser-known regional destinations among the trends shaping visitor choices.

Speaking at a media event in Sydney last night, executive director of marketing Michael Branagh said NSW welcomed more than 120 million visitors over the past year, including more than 60 million to regional NSW.

Destination NSW PR campaigns and events manager Carla Horvath said accommodation was becoming a destination in its own right, while travellers were also increasingly seeking quieter places and experiences away from more built-up areas for their leisure trips.

"Travellers are increasingly starting with what they want to feel, experience, or connect with, then they choose the destination, that delivers it," she said. **ZH**

ON LOCATION

Amsterdam

Today's issue of **TD** is coming to you from Amsterdam, where Viking Cruises is about to name seven river ships.

BOARDING the *Viking Rota*, we are surrounded by preparations for today's naming ceremony, with big screens and staging equipment providing a backdrop for VIP arrivals.

As well as the two Australian godparents, Virtuoso's Michael Londregan and Danielle Galloway from FCTG, there are five key Viking travel partners from the US market on board.

Special shore excursions before the event include an iconic Amsterdam canal cruise, visits to the Rijksmuseum and even a stroopwafel workshop.

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Thursday 15th Oct 2026

Small groups loving Pearl

PEARL Expeditions is reporting growing demand for small group expeditions, with Raja Ampat, Borneo, Papua New Guinea and its 2027 Kimberley departures attracting strong interest.

Executive chair Sarina Bratton said the line was seeing an encouraging number of new-to-cruise guests, alongside repeat business as its *Paspaley Pearl* operation entered its second year.

"While travellers are spending more selectively on distinctive, hard-to-replicate experiences close to home, it is encouraging to see the large number of new-to-cruise guests," Bratton said.

"We are also seeing considerable repeat business as our guests understand the huge difference and benefit in travelling with just 28 other guests," she continued.

The 30-guest vessel has seen demand driven by bespoke experiences including fishing,



scenic flights aboard the historic Paspaley Mallard amphibious aircraft and visits to Paspaley pearling operations, with access to working pearl vessels on select Kimberley sailings.

Pearl Expeditions is also attracting high-end domestic and international tour operators, member organisations and multigenerational families seeking memorable and intimate expedition experiences.

The demand has culminated in Pearl Expeditions' strongest-ever FIT sales week, including a record single day of sales on 6 Oct. ZH

TokyoTokyo Old meets New

LEARN AND WIN
a trip to Tokyo!

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Viking godparents all set



TONIGHT is the big night for Viking when it will formally name seven new river ships in Amsterdam with the able assistance of two iconic Aussie travel industry godparents.

Virtuoso senior VP, Michael Londregan, will become the godfather of the new *Viking Ptah*, being named by video link from Egypt; while Danielle Galloway,

Flight Centre Travel Group global MD of luxury and independent brands, will become the godmother of *Viking Sjöfn* which is currently in Northern Germany.

Some of the Australian contingent are **pictured** from left: Jane Moggridge and Keira Smith, Viking; Danielle Galloway; Michelle Black, Viking; and Michael Londregan, Virtuoso.

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BUSES



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Thursday 15th Oct 2026

QF becomes US influencer

QANTAS has joined Visit USA Australia's industry network alongside six other new members, strengthening the organisation's connections with the Australian travel trade following a successful IPW.

New member additions also include Visit Montana, Princess Cruises, Alaska By Design, Alaska Railroad, Air Tahiti Nui and Louisville Tourism.

Visit USA Australia president Belinda Harvy (**pictured**) said the growth reflected strong investment in the Australian market and the importance of travel agents in driving greater visitation to the US.

"It is a real vote of confidence in the Australian travel trade and the important role agents continue to play in driving visitation to the USA," she said.

Harvy said the organisation provided members with opportunities to connect with



Australian agents through its expo series, webinars, industry events, website and EDMs.

Visit USA Australia's final webinar series for 2026 will take place on 19 Nov, featuring updates from Visit Seattle, Louisiana Office of Tourism, Universal Studios Hollywood, Handlery Hotels and Howard Johnson Hotels.

The organisation's annual Visit USA Expo Series will return in Feb 2027, beginning in Brisbane on 15 Feb, followed by Melbourne on 16 Feb and Sydney on 17 Feb. ZH

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Seabourn big in '29

SEABOURN has unveiled 166 sailings for its 2029 summer season, visiting more than 180 destinations across the Mediterranean, Northern Europe, Alaska, Canada and New England.

Highlights include a return to Egypt for the first time in more than five years, a new seven-day Gulf of Bothnia itinerary, as well as maiden calls across Europe.

The collection also features extended port calls, overnight stays and Alaskan expeditions. ZH

Vancouver plus more

AIR Canada is offering Australian travellers connecting through Vancouver International Airport to the US a range of discounts, gifts and experiences when travelling via the city.

Available until 31 Dec 2026, the promotion includes complimentary wine tastings, spa discounts, designer outlet savings and hotel offers. ZH



Window seat

A MAN in the US has taken the term budy smuggling to a whole new level after Customs and Border Protection (CBP) allegedly caught him with ten Cuban birds in his underwear.

Alberto Hernandez Castillo entered Miami International Airport on Sun after visiting family in Cuba, telling CBP agents he was not bringing any animals or wildlife into the country before they noticed a mysterious bulging around his waistline, noting he appeared to be nervous.

Officers escorted the man to be searched before discovering six plastic tubes sewn into his underwear with eight yellow-faced grassquits and two blue grosbeaks inside - thankfully alive - according to shocked investigators. ZH



CHINA AIRLINES



SYDNEY ↔ TAIPEI

Daily Flight

From 25 October





Iceland GDS move

ICELAND'S largest hotel group, Islandshotel has selected Aven Hospitality's SynXis platform to consolidate booking and distribution across 18 properties, streamlining connectivity for corporate travel managers and leisure agencies. ZH

Calling all Kims for WA

INTREPID Travel and Tourism Western Australia have launched a campaign offering four Australians named Kimberley, Kimberly or a variation of the name the chance to win an adventure through the iconic Kimberley region.

Launched on this week, The Kimberley Calls competition invites entrants to explain in 25 words or less why the Kimberley is calling them or someone they know with the name.

The prize includes a 10-day Intrepid trip from Broome to Kununurra, showcasing the region's gorges, freshwater pools, remote wilderness and stunning outback landscapes.

The campaign's first phase features a hero video, while a second phase will deliver longer-form destination content highlighting the region's landscapes, wildlife and Aboriginal culture.



Intrepid Travel ANZ General Manager Yvette Thompson said the campaign aimed to raise the profile of the destination while having some fun with its name.

"We thought, why not turn the name Kimberley into a very good reason to visit the Kimberley?"

"The Kimberley is a pretty special part of Australia, so we are having a bit of fun...while giving four very lucky Kims the chance to experience it for themselves," she said.

Intrepid operates four Kimberley itineraries, with bookings for its 14-day 'Kimberley Trail' up almost 50% year-on-year to date. ZH

BA celebrates SL

BRITISH Airways is partnering with London-based Sri Lankan and South Indian restaurant Hoppers to introduce a special menu for Club World passengers on its new Colombo route, from 23 Oct, featuring dishes inspired by Sri Lankan cuisine. ZH

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Mauritius in crisis

DEMONSTRATIONS are occurring in Mauritius following a police shooting on 09 Oct, forcing the government to extend its curfew (TD 14 Oct).

Smarttraveller said further protests may occur at short notice and could disrupt traffic, public transport and access to services for travellers.

The Australian High Commission remains open for normal operations despite the chaos. AB

Lufthansa taps buy

LUFTHANSA has won a bid with the Portuguese Government to take a 49.9% stake of TAP Air Portugal for €1.2b (\$A1.92 billion), pipping Air France-KLM.

The purchase sees the German airline land a new strategic partnership with one of Europe's last unaligned flag carriers.

The Portuguese Government has been looking to offload a share of the carrier since at least May this year, when Air France KLM offered to purchase 44.9% (TD 12 May 2026). ZH

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CRUISES & TOURS

EUROPE
RIVER
CRUISING
2027

Earlybird offers end
31 October 2026



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QF keen on Samoa

QANTAS plans to operate an additional weekly return Sydney-Auckland-Apia service using Boeing 737-800 aircraft configured with 168 seats.

The International Air Services Commission has received an application from the carrier seeking 132 seats a week in each direction on the Samoa route. *AB*

Oberammergau '30

SCENIC has opened pre-registration for its 2030 Oberammergau Passion Play journeys, with a refundable \$250 per person deposit securing priority access to the program.

The once-a-decade Bavarian tradition will feature in anticipated European river cruise and land journeys, with itineraries, departure dates and inclusions to be announced.

The show depicts the final days and resurrection of Jesus. *ZH*

Moreton green light

COMISKEY Group has secured approval for a \$180 million, 25,000m² lifestyle precinct at North Lakes, Queensland, featuring a 144-room five-star hotel, destination dining, retail, wellness and entertainment.

The development, revealed last year (*TD* 08 Aug 2025), will include a 2,000m² signature hospitality venue and public spaces and aims to attract both locals and int'l visitors to the Moreton Bay visitors. *ZH*

A unique brand briefing



THE Unique Tourism Collection (UTC) has brought eight international travel brands and destinations to Australia for its annual showcase, connecting with more than 100 travel agent partners across Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane.

The events were held at Victoria By Farmer's Daughters in Mel, Ventuno Restaurant in Sydney and OTTO Ristorante in Brisbane, hosted by UTC co-owner and GM Svetlana Jovanovic, senior account directors Louise Hill and Victoria Jaworskyj, and BDM Karen Hitchings.

Updates came from reps from Travel Collection, Jean-Michel Cousteau Resort Fiji, VisitMalta, Alma Resort Cam Ranh, GOCO Hospitality's Fivlements, Teardrop Hotels, Union Resorts & Spas, and Maldives properties Banyan Tree Vabbinfaru and

Dhawa Ihuru.

Jovanovic said the annual showcase provided an opportunity for clients to share news about their properties, tourism boards and destinations with Aussie industry partners. *ZH*

Singapore dining

SINGAPORE Airlines will refresh its in-flight dining experience with more than 100 new and revamped dishes, expanded beverage options and custom-designed serviceware on board.

The SIA Chefs' Selection additions include regional favourites and reimagined classics, while premium cabins will receive new Christofle tableware featuring the airline's batik motif.

New dishes will be rolled out through until Nov 2026. *ZH*

Princess is Amazonian

PRINCESS Cruises has unveiled its expansive 2028/29 Americas collection, which will see it return to the Amazon River for the first time since 2014.

More than 250 departures will take place across the season, spanning South America, Canada, Antarctica, New England, the Caribbean and Hawaii.

A highlight will be Princess' return to the Amazon for a program of scenic cruising, as well as a visit to Santarem.

The Amazon will also be included in Princess' 64-day 'Circle South America' itinerary, which combines the second-longest river in the world with Antarctica and the Panama Canal.

Other headline voyages include four-day getaways along the West Coast of the United States and ocean-to-ocean voyages through the Panama Canal, connecting the Atlantic and Pacific. *MS*

Solomons Jul record

THE Solomon Islands' Jul visitor numbers broke a 14-year record, the company's DMO revealed.

The destination recorded 2,941 arrivals during the month, marking its best Jul since 2012, when 2,865 travellers arrived, according to figures released by the Solomon Islands National Statistics Office.

Stats also showed arrivals for Jul were 25.9% higher than the 2,335 achieved in the same period of last year, and are 12% ahead year-to-date through Jul. *MS*



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WA GETTING DOWN TO BUSINESS

WESTERN Australia has launched a five-year strategy to grow its \$1.7 billion business events sector, targeting high-value conferences to boost tourism, trade and investment.

The *Western Australia Business Events Strategy 2026-2030* was developed by the WA Government and Business Events Perth, with a focus on attracting events aligned with the state's priority sectors and encouraging delegates to explore regional destinations pre- and post-trip.

Business Events Perth secured over 350 national and international events in 2024-25, expected to generate close to \$361 million in direct delegate expenditure through to 2030.

The strategy is backed by an additional \$10 million over two years for Business Events Perth in the 2026-27 WA State Budget.



Premier Roger Cook (**pictured**) said business events would help diversify the economy and create jobs at the same time.

"The strategy sets out a clear plan to secure the highest-value business events for our state," Premier Roger Cook explained upon unveiling the strategy.

"We are strengthening Western Australia's growing status as a global hub for business,

innovation and opportunity, creating lasting value for local business and jobs that extend beyond the tourism sector."

Recent events hosted in WA include the Australia-Japan Joint Business Conference, the Indian Ocean Defence & Security Conference and Exhibition, and Land Forces 2026, which attracted more than 15,000 visitors to the State. *ZH*

Experts wanted

THE Brisbane Economic Development Agency (BEDA) is inviting the capital's leading researchers, innovators and industry experts to apply for the 2027 Lord Mayor's Convention Trailblazer Grant.

Successful applicants will receive a grant of up to \$5,000 (excluding GST) to attend a major international conference in their field and advocate for Brisbane as a future host city.

"This grant backs Brisbane's best and brightest to make connections overseas and then bring those opportunities home," Lord Mayor Adrian Schrinner said.

The funding covers conference registration fees and travel expenses - applications close 26 Feb. *JM*

NSW sets record

BUSINESS Events Sydney delivered a record year in FY2025/26, securing 104 global and national business events that will bring 77,000 delegates and an estimated \$345 million in direct expenditure to NSW.

According to the latest Tourism Research Australia data, NSW attracted 7.8 million business event visitors in the year ending Jun 2026, with a spend of \$6.3 billion.

Hassett honoured for 45 yrs of innovation

THE Australian Event Awards has announced Michael Hassett (**pictured**), founder and managing director of Technical Direction Company (TDC), as the recipient of the 2026 Lifetime Achievement Award.

Recognising Hassett for 45 years of innovation, leadership and contribution to Australia's events industry, the accolade will be formally presented at the '26 Australian Event Awards Ceremony on Wed 21 Oct 2026.



Hassett's expertise has contributed to some of Australia's most iconic cultural experiences, including Vivid Sydney and the iconic Lighting of the Sails on the Sydney Opera House. *JM*

AI barriers identified

NEW research from EventsAir has found that while 72% of event professionals value AI, one in four (26%) are still not using it at all, with nearly two-thirds identifying a lack of knowledge or expertise as a key barrier.

Of those who are using AI, event marketing is currently the leading application, cited by 62.4% of respondents, followed by data analysis and reporting (37.8%).

The findings came from a survey of 380 event professionals across EMEA, ANZ and North America - see the full report **HERE**. *JM*



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Hilton has appointed **Andrew Ling** and **Alex Shockley** to two leadership roles in Asia Pacific, strengthening its brand leadership to support the continued growth of its portfolio. Ling steps into the role of regional head focused service & all suites brands Asia Pacific, while Shockley has been appointed senior director lifestyle & collection brands Asia Pacific.

Journey Beyond has selected **John Hansen** as its manager customer digital and AI. The appointment marks a step up for Hansen, who has been with the company for more than three years as a software engineer, based in Adelaide.

Simon McNally, who previously spent five years with Cover-More, is now head of partnership success with **Redion**, the recently rebranded travel insurer formerly known as Europ Assistance. Redion chief executive officer Justin Sebire commented he was thrilled to have McNally join the team at "an exciting time of growth".

Nicola Harford is stepping into a new role at **Collette** as partnerships marketing manager. The former **Travel Daily** advertising operations guru has spent almost three years with Collette, and said in a LinkedIn post she was very excited to continue working with the tour operator's valued trade partners.

Etihad Airways chief commercial officer **Arik De** stepped down last week, following nearly five years with the airline. During his tenure, Etihad's annual revenue grew from approximately US\$3 billion to nearly US\$10 billion, De said. No permanent successor has been announced.

NRMA Group has recruited **Kimon Giannopoulos** as its new group chief financial officer. Kimon will draw on experience gained during more than 15 years serving at Qantas Group, most recently as its group executive finance and strategy.

Bob East to depart



EXPERIENCE Co chair Bob East is set to exit following completion of the company's proposed transaction with Inflight Group which is subject to approval.

"Mr East will retire from office and stand for re-election at the company's upcoming annual general meeting," an Experience Co release to the ASX noted.

The long-serving senior executive will continue in his role through the process as the board undertakes a succession plan.

East has been a key part of the Experience Co team since 2018, when he initially joined as a non-executive director. ZH

Tomah needs stays

BLUE Mountains Botanic Garden Mount Tomah is seeking proposals for its first overnight accommodation, with eco-lodges, cabins and glamping among potential concepts.

Botanic Gardens of Sydney has opened expressions of interest across three precincts within the UNESCO World Heritage-listed Greater Blue Mountains Area.

The garden attracts more than 220,000 visitors annually, while the wider region draws around 2.6 million visitors.

Submissions close on 20 Nov. ZH

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