

Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today features five pages of news, including our **Corporate Update**, plus a full page from **Emirates**.

Premium Princesses

THE first phase of Princess Cruises' multi-year fleet modernisation program will see the line expand its Sanctuary Collection resort-style experience across five of its Royal Class ships.

Beginning with *Royal Princess* and continuing across *Discovery Princess*, *Enchanted Princess*, *Regal Princess* and *Sky Princess*, the upgrade adds premium services such as private spaces, exclusive dining, personalised experiences and a collection of high-end amenities.

Sanctuary Collection guests will also enjoy priority access and reservations, unlimited premium beverages, dining options inspired by the destination and high-speed wi-fi. **AB**

Collette provides certainty

EXCLUSIVE

COLLETTE is pulling out all the stops to ensure Aussie travel advisors can secure bookings amid an ongoing climate of geopolitical uncertainty and travel disruptions.

Speaking with **TD** while in Australia, the operator's global head of sales Christian Leibl-Cote said the brand's guaranteed departures, flexible cancellation policy and round-the-clock emergency support were important ways it was looking to bolster traveller confidence.

Collette has a cancel-for-any-reason policy in place up to 24 hours prior to departure, offering a full refund minus the deposit.

Win VIP experience

EMIRATES is offering tickets to its Ultimate 2027 Sporting Encounters to eight high-selling agents - see **back page** for info.

"We don't ask questions and travellers get a full refund... this gives a sense of security for the travellers and it gives an opportunity for the agents to say, 'if you don't feel comfortable in a couple of months, you still can get all your money back'."

The company also has guaranteed departure dates in place through to Jun 2028.

"Advisors now have the opportunity to book these trips much further ahead, which is great, and we keep adding more guaranteed departure dates because we feel that is extremely important," Leibl-Cote said.

Collette has enjoyed another strong period of growth in Australia, with Leibl-Cote revealing it has seen double-digit increases in both passenger numbers and revenue.

"Travel for Aussies is a necessity and not a luxury - they will do whatever they can to travel." **AB**

WSI ready to take-off

THIS weekend represents a rare quantum leap forward for Australian aviation, with the first commercial passenger flight to take off from Western Sydney International Airport on Sun.

The milestone first flight will be a Jetstar service to the Gold Coast, departing at 11am.

So far, seven carriers have committed to WSI, Jetstar, Air NZ, Singapore Airlines, Qantas, Qatar Airways, Fiji Airways & Vietjet. **AB**

Sartini at Virtuoso

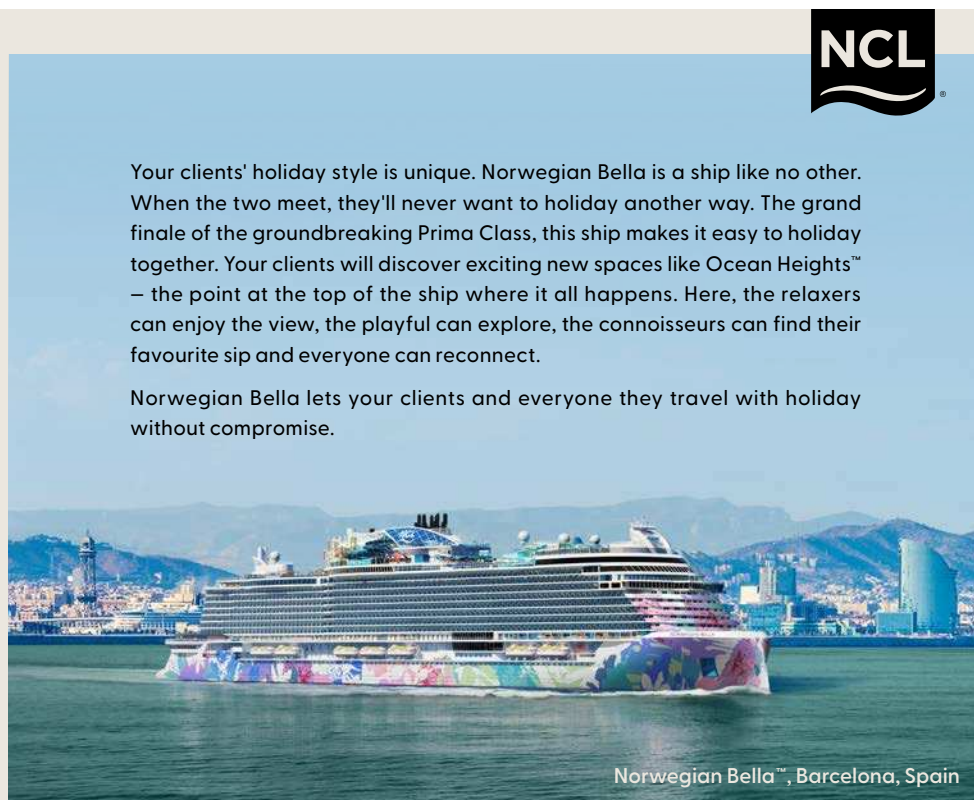
JASMINA Sartini has been appointed head of global partnerships at Virtuoso.

She was most recently vice president of sales for Envoyage in the United States, and brings strong cruise and agency experience to the table.

Originally from Australia, Sartini was once the global trade sales & business development manager for Aurora Expeditions in Sydney.



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Tackling air complexity

AMADEUS and Nvidia have signed a memorandum of understanding to explore how AI could deliver faster flight searches, with potential implications for travel agents who are required to process increasingly complex itineraries.

The tech companies have already conducted initial technical assessments using Nvidias Hopper and Blackwell platforms, with early tests showing potential to improve response times and scalability.

Collaboration is focusing on three areas: optimising flight-search performance using graphics processing units, exploring travel-specific AI foundation models and improving cloud infrastructure efficiency.

Amadeus said the work aimed to accommodate growing volumes of searches generated by AI-powered travel assistants, while at the same time ensuring



results remain accurate and available for bookings.

For Australian agents, the research could lead to faster responses to complex customer requests and more efficient searches across flight options.

"As AI transforms the travel ecosystem, maintaining fast, accurate and bookable flight search at global scale requires new approaches," SVP strategic partnerships Lutz Vorneweg said.

Amadeus did not reveal a timeline for when the findings of the collaboration could be integrated into any agency-facing products or services.

The development follows a report from Amadeus last year that noted a 64% increase in AI usage in travel planning. **AB**



Vietjet health check

A **SPOKESPERSON** for CASA has confirmed that it has been authorised to conduct a financial viability assessment of Vietjet as part of its plan to launch a domestic carrier in Australia, according to *The Australian*.

The UK court ordered a global asset freeze on Mon (**TD** 19 Oct).

Tech guru goes solo

THE man who pioneered the Princess Cruises Medallion when he was president of the line has started a new AI company called Spaxial to support personalised travel across cruise lines, resorts and theme parks.

John Padgett has a reputation for digital innovation in the travel industry, and was also the driving force behind Disney's MagicBand and FastPass+.

The new platform aims to equip frontline workers in travel with "hyper-personalised services for every guest", Padgett said. **AB**

Queen of Australia

CUNARD'S iconic *Queen Elizabeth* is returning Down Under in 2028-29 with a 115-night World Voyage including an overnight stay in Sydney.

While in Australia, she will also call at Fremantle, Kangaroo Island, Melbourne and Burnie.

Following Australia, *Queen Elizabeth* will then cross the Tasman to take in the NZ cities of Auckland and Wellington.

Guests are welcome to join the 2,074-passenger ship on one of three sectors embarking or disembarking in Australia.

These include a nine-night trip from Fremantle to Sydney departing 16 Mar 2029 and a 28-night cruise from Sydney to Los Angeles sailing from 25 Mar, which can then be extended to a 43-night adventure to Miami.

Queen Elizabeth's wider World Voyage stretches across five continents, departing Southampton on 23 Jan 2029 and returning on 17 May 2029. **JHM**



Pacific Islands

RED TAIL SALE

Help your customers save on flights to Palau, Norfolk Island, Solomon Islands and more. Hurry, ends 26 October.*

Find out more

*Sale ends 11.59pm (AEDT) 26 October 2026 unless sold out prior. Select routes, travel dates and conditions apply.





Nothing odd about agents

EXCLUSIVE

FLEDGLING operator Oddtrips has flagged its intentions to work even more closely with Australian travel advisors in its second year of operations, the company's GM Paul Hocking has revealed.

The business specialises in taking Aussies to lesser-known destinations, and confirmed all of its trips are fully commissionable on a staggered basis, with the percentage depending on how much product each advisor sells.

Hocking said that part of Oddtrips' mission now is to make selling its trips even easier for agents, telling **Travel Daily** that work is underway to launch further support for sellers over the next 12 months.

"We are looking at setting up a monthly newsletter for travel



agents which will give them a lot more information about our new trips and potentially bonus commission deals," Hocking said.

"We also want more agents to sign up to our database which they can do directly through our website...so they can access important insider information."

Hocking also flagged the possibility of running trade webinars down the track, and while Oddtrips is unlikely to be able to accommodate a full group famil in the short-term, he said giving advisors exposure to its product through selected touring opportunities was part of the company's road map.

Small group tours currently make up roughly half of Oddtrips' business, and Hocking said "a big chunk" of its bookings are coming through custom trips, while solo clients are also a strong pillar.

Oddtrips has grown from 35 trips at launch to more than 100 across 80 destinations, but despite that strong growth trajectory, Hocking said the next 12 months would focus less on adding destinations and more on refining itineraries - creating more combinations and responding to unique customer requests. **AB**

Hilton's Nordic plan

HILTON has firmed up plans to expand its Nordic portfolio, signing a deal with Scandic Hotels Group to assess development opportunities in several nations.

Sweden, Norway, Denmark and Finland are all on Hilton's radar for expansion, with the agreement also planning to align loyalty benefits between the two companies at a later date. **AB**

Mile-a-Min returns

LOYALTY program Emirates Skywards is bringing back its Mile-a-Minute offer for a limited time only, giving members one Skywards Mile for every minute spent in Dubai.

The initiative gives guests the chance to earn bonus Miles on top of those earned on eligible Emirates and flydubai flights.

To take advantage of Mile-a-Minute, Emirates loyalty members must register and book an eligible return flight with either airline between 21 Oct-05 Nov 2026 for travel between 21 Oct-13 Dec 2026.

Members can earn up to 7,200 bonus miles. **JHM**

EOIs for Skyfields

SKYFIELDS by Perth Airport is calling for expressions of interest (EOIs) from hospitality, entertainment and leisure operators to help shape a new precinct at Dunreath Green.

PER is seeking operators who could make the space a reason to visit and return to the city. **AB**



Window Seat

THE quest to take Australian travellers to small hidden gems in Europe has just gone to a new level, with the 21-year-old president of Verdis pushing ahead with plans to make the 'country' legitimately recognised.

We would not blame you for failing to point to Verdis on the map - for one thing, it's not there yet - but UK-born Daniel Jackson is working hard to change that.

The ambitious youth declared himself president of Verdis a few years ago when he noticed that several patches of land along the Danube River were unclaimed by Croatia or Serbia.

Measuring slightly larger than Vatican City, Verdis is only accessible via boat from Osijek, however Jackson has never set foot on the land because Croatia has banned him from entering.

Undeterred by his technical status as a government in exile, Jackson was this week honoured by the United Nations for his humanitarian work in the Ivory Coast.



KrisWorld levels up

SINGAPORE Airlines' KrisWorld entertainment experience has undergone an upgrade, featuring 4K high-res touchscreen displays on selected aircraft and noise-cancellation headphones.

Guests will also enjoy Bluetooth pairing for personal headphones, a redesigned user interface, wellness planner, personalisation features and more than 2,500 entertainment options.

The next-gen KrisWorld will roll out on 41 retrofitted Airbus A350-900 long-haul and ultra long-range aircraft which will enter service from 2027. **JHM**

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CORPORATE UPDATE

BCD embarks on cloud shift

BCD Travel is now transferring its entire platform from a queue-based system to cloud-based data streaming, creating a faster, more scalable basis for servicing travellers, operational consistency and automation.

It is good news for corporate



travel programs, as the shift will send changes and cancellations directly into BCD's Tripsource platform, allowing agents or automated workflows to respond and alert travellers sooner.

Travel managers will also have a more up-to-date view of traveller locations and teams can work from the latest booking information, avoiding duplications and errors.

Meanwhile, advisors will also now be able to quickly view program spend and activity.

"For years, travel data worked like checking your mailbox over and over to see whether a package had arrived," said John Palomino, BCD's senior vice president of enterprise development (pictured).

"Streaming changes that - it is like getting an instant notification the moment it is delivered."

Sabre's Dirk Guenther noted that as travel moves in real time, the systems behind it need to keep up.

"We are giving BCD and its clients the ability to act on signals the moment they happen, from smarter servicing to faster responses when trips shift." JHM

QR a vote for business

QATAR Airways' decision to fly out of Western Sydney International is "a real vote of confidence" in the city's new hub, global chief operating officer of FCM Travel and Corporate Traveller Melissa Elf believes.

"Western Sydney is home to a huge and growing business community, and until now, a lot of those travellers have had to battle their way across the city before a long-haul trip even begins," she said.

"Having a direct link to Doha on their doorstep with onward connections right across Europe, the Middle East and Africa, is going to make a real difference to how they travel," Elf added.

The senior Flight Centre corporate executive also said Qatar Airways committing to WSI would ultimately result in a big win for business travellers and lift the standard of services.

"Every new airline that commits to Western Sydney puts a bit more pressure on carriers and airports to lift their game, whether that is on price, schedules or service," Elf said. AB



Travel Daily

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Saffire Freycinet reborn



THE Tasmanian east coast luxury lodge Saffire Freycinet will open a new Jewel private villa in Dec, offering guests a premium 800sqm private space overlooking the Hazards mountain range and Great Oyster Bay.

Features of the Luxury Lodges of Australia villa include three bedrooms with ensuites, an 18-metre infinity pool, a private guide and concierge team, as well as a private wine cellar.

Interior upgrades to the guest suites in the main lodge are now underway as well.

Alongside the lodge's plus one service - its signature

personalised hospitality approach to cater for individual tastes

- the property is also evolving its program of experiences such as Saffire After Dark, a guided stargazing tour of Tasmania's clear skies.

MEANWHILE, in May 2027, Luxury Lodges of Australia's Bullo River Station in the Northern Territory will reopen following a revamp of the homestead and the construction of a new guest wing with larger rooms. AB

WSI to the capital

WITH passenger flights from WSI taking off this Sun, FlixBus Australia has launched a new line connecting Sydney's second hub directly with Canberra.

The journey starts in Parramatta and stops at WSI and Goulburn before terminating in Canberra.

FlixBus will service the route operating two departures each way and will run daily. AB

Pull in at the Pullman

PULLMAN Sydney Penrith is welcoming guests arriving via Western Sydney International with a flight recovery kit, including a relaxing chamomile tea, delicious caramel fudge and bamboo sleep mask.

Guests who present their boarding pass at check-in will also be offered a themed welcome drink upon arrival.

Located 20 minutes from the airport, Pullman is the region's first five-star hotel and forms part of the Panthers Precinct. JHM



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No solo surcharge on selected staterooms is available when booking a Fred. Olsen Cruise Lines voyage through **Cruise Traveller** by 04 Nov. The deal is subject to availability, with conditions applying - call Cruise Traveller on 1800 507 777.

Blue Lagoon Cruises' double deal has been extended, with passengers able to score up to 20% off and get a free stateroom upgrade. The small-ship cruise line has extended the sale until 22 Nov, with guests able to get 20% off Hibiscus Cabin fares, plus a complimentary upgrade to an Orchid Cabin on three-, four- and seven-night cruises. Make a reservation through Blue Lagoon's Agent Booking Portal and use the promo code 'DOUBLE27' to access the deal.

Airnorth's Beyond the Ordinary sale has been extended, with airfares starting from \$216. Special deals can now be accessed through to the end of the month, with Darwin to Kununurra leading in from \$216 and Broome to Kununurra from \$241 - **CLICK HERE** for more information.

Stay for two nights and save with **Discovery Parks**, with 20% off select midweek campsite bookings and 50 % off at select Discovery Resorts. Book by 16 Dec for midweek stays (Sun to Thu) at Discovery Parks with travel through to 18 Dec, while discounted Discovery Resorts can be booked by 28 Feb for stays any day of the week until 25 Mar. For a full list of participating parks, exclusions, blackout dates, and terms & conditions, **CLICK HERE**.

Save up to CAD\$225 (approximately A\$229) on dining credit on **Whistler Blackcomb** bookings by the end of next month. The resort opens for the winter on 20 Nov, with those booking more than five nights between 20 Nov and 30 Apr to receive their Whistler dining credit for free. Enter the promo code 'WINTERDINING' at Whistler.com on check out to receive CAD\$50 for five-night stays, CAD\$75 for seven-night stays, and CAD\$225 for 10-night stays. Participating restaurants are listed online.

Aurora Expeditions is inviting cruisers to 'Stop Saying Someday' to Antarctic exploration, offering savings up to 35% per person on select voyages. Terms & conditions apply, and for more information and booking, **CLICK HERE**.

New 'Takes Two to Tango' packages are available at **Holiday Inn & Suites Sunshine Coast**. The newly relaunched hotel is offering a buffet breakfast, late checkout, tickets to BCC Cinemas Maroochydore Sunshine Plaza and more. Starting from \$299 per room, per night, to book, **CLICK HERE**.

Savings for 2029 African voyages aboard **Atlas Ocean Voyages' Atlas Adventurer** are available for bookings by 05 Jan. Cruisers can get air credit of up to US\$6,000 (approximately A\$8,500) per twin suite on selected African sailings. Call 1800 507 777 for more information.



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Washington refurb plan

EXCLUSIVE

WASHINGTON Dulles International Airport (IAD) is set to undertake a US\$22 billion (A\$31 billion) capital program to improve the passenger experience, with construction covering around 464,000sqm.

The investment will make the airport easier to navigate, with a walkable customs experience, advanced security screening technology, intuitive connections, natural light, greenery and more.

"Today's passengers want more than an airport that simply gets them from one place to another," Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority executive VP and chief revenue officer Chryssa Westerlund (**pictured**) told delegates at the 2026 Virginia Global Travel Forum.

"They want an experience that is efficient, enjoyable, engaging."

The airport also intends to preserve the architectural legacy of its iconic main terminal, designed by Eero Saarinen, while modernising facilities to meet changing traveller expectations.

IAD's upgrade will also build on its existing connectivity with



Virginia's metro system, with the airport also ranking second in the US for on-time departures.

"We are not simply preparing for more passengers, we're preparing to serve those passengers better," Westerlund told delegates.

IAD currently offers nonstop services to 69 international and 95 domestic destinations. **ZH**

Azamara breaks it up

AZAMARA Cruises has opened bookings for two shorter journeys as part of its 2029 World Cruise, with the line already seeing strong uptake of the Sydney-Copenhagen sector.

Director of sales Victoria Chigwidden noted Azamara's 139-day ex-Sydney segment is already performing well.

"The combination of a smaller ship, greater inclusions, and access to smaller, more unique ports is clearly resonating with the Australian traveller, offering guests a more intimate and immersive way to explore the world," she added.

Azamara's Sydney departure is one of three itineraries available as part of the World Cruise, which also includes options from San Diego to both London (179 nights) and Denmark (195 nights).

Around two-thirds of the full World Cruise will be spent in port.

Taiwan is in a spin

TYPHOON Champi is causing severe winds, rainfall, and rough seas in northern Taiwan, including the capital Taipei.

Smarttraveller is warning there may be flight and transport disruptions in the country, with Aussies urged to keep updated on the status of their transport arrangement and monitor local weather updates and media reports on the situation. **MS**

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Emirates is giving you the opportunity to win the Ultimate 2027 Sporting Encounter. Simply issue at least one adult return ticket by 31 October 2026 for travel on the Emirates global network from Australia to Dubai and beyond, departing by 30 June 2027, and you could enjoy one of Emirates' exclusive VIP sporting experiences. Be one of the eight highest selling registered agents or one of two lucky winners chosen during the incentive period and you will score two tickets to one of Emirates global sporting events below, including return economy class airfares* to the venue.



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