

MTA Advisor:
Beth Betland

NTIA
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Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today features 10 pages of industry news, including a photo page from **Malaysia Airlines** and our **Sustainability feature**, plus a full page from **Silversea**.

Big suite savings

TRAVELLERS can save up to \$7,000 per suite on Silversea voyages booked by 02 Nov. Find out more on **page 11**.

Sale away to NZ

AIR New Zealand is offering discounted flights to Aussies who are looking to enjoy a getaway over the ditch.

Available until 18 Sep, the 'Sale Away to NZ' campaign offers one-way fares starting from \$285. *JM*

NTIA nods to CATO learners

THE Australian Travel Industry Association (ATIA) will recognise the highest-performing travel advisors on the CATO Touring Academy at this year's National Travel Industry Awards (NTIA).

The new CATO Touring Academy Top Learner category will celebrate advisors who have demonstrated "exceptional commitment to professional development and touring knowledge through their ongoing engagement with the Academy", ATIA said.

Finalists are dominated by Queenslanders: Danielle Cameron, Robert Fletcher, and Amy Mudge; and Victorians: Zoe



Hannaford and Brett Atkinson.

"One of the most exciting outcomes of bringing CATO and ATIA together is the opportunity to take successful CATO initiatives and give them an even greater platform across the broader travel industry," ATIA chief executive officer Dean Long said.

"Recognising the CATO Touring Academy's leading learners at the NTIAs is a great example of that in action."

The CATO Touring Academy Top Learner will be announced with the rest of the winners on 10 Oct at Palladium at Crown in Melbourne (**pictured**). *JM/MS*

All about New Cal

NEW Caledonia Tourism will host a webinar this Thu at 11.30am AEST to introduce the newly launched hotel brand Le Domaine du Pacifique, Series by Marriott, to the trade industry.

Attendees will learn how the three regions - Isle of Pines, Bourail and Noumea - can be combined to create an itinerary for their clients.

The session will be hosted by Rebecca Marchal, Australian representative for the tourism board, and Camille Monvoisin, who oversees sales, revenue & distribution for the new properties: Le Domaine Noumea, Le Domaine Deva and Le Domaine Oro - register **HERE**. *JM*

PAL Konnects

PHILIPPINE Airlines' NDC content is now live on TravelTech Konnect, taking the CVFR-led platform to 24 airlines.

The consolidator is now the first in Australia to offer the carrier's Verteil-powered connection live for travel advisors.

Agents have full control of the booking life cycle through the Konnect portal, from search and booking to ticketing, reissue, and cancellation, as well as the ability to review fares. *MS*

AirBaltic bankrupt

LATVIA'S national carrier airBaltic has filed for Chapter 11 Bankruptcy protection, revealing that it has secured a commitment for €350m (A\$566m) from a range of lenders.

Flights will operate as scheduled, with tickets and reservations still valid, and passengers able to continue booking as usual.

The funding will be nailed to an interest rate of approximately 12%, as determined by private global investment firm Strategic Value Partners.

The process is designed to set up a sustainable capital structure and competitive cost position.

Chapter 11 allows a business to remain operational as it pays off debt and reorganises finances. *ZH*



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CX appoints two

CATHAY Pacific (CX) has made two key appointments with Richard Jones as area head, Oceania and Aldric Chau as regional general manager, Southeast Asia.

Jones' new role will see him strengthen the airline group's position in Oceania, forming new customer and trade partnerships.

He has been with CX for the past four years, previously holding the roles of vice president, customer travel & lifestyle, Southwest Pacific and sales & marketing manager, Australia.

Chau steps into his role previously serving as CX's general manager digital, leading the group's data science, AI capabilities, analytics, innovation and digital transformation.

Now based in Singapore, his new role will be responsible for commercial, operational and support functions for CX's 20 ports in the APAC region. *JB*

Tasmania gets in the Spirit

SPIRIT of Tasmania's new-generation vessels (**TD 28** May 2026) are set to deliver a significantly enhanced onboard experience for passengers, while appealing to key travel segments.

Passenger sailings are set to commence next month, with the new fleet introducing a range of upgrades to the ferries' product.

Spirit of Tasmania IV and *Spirit of Tasmania V* will both debut on 31 Oct, designed to carry an additional 470 passengers and feature 301 staterooms.

There will be enhanced accommodation options, including premium, family and deluxe staterooms, as well as business-class recliners.

The growing number of Australians holidaying with pets will also be catered to, with dedicated pet-friendly cabins set to make their debut.

Elevated Tasmanian food and



beverage offerings will showcase local produce and producers, while increased vehicle height clearance will expand capacity for caravans and road-trippers, alongside a general overall increase in vehicle capacity.

"We are entering a new era for Bass Strait passenger travel, with *Spirit IV* and *V* delivering an unrivalled travel experience," Premier of Tasmania Jeremy Rockliff said.

"The new *Spirits* offer expanded capacity, new accommodation options such as pet cabins, contemporary onboard spaces and a stronger showcase of Tasmania's best food, wine and craftsmanship," he added. *MS*

NSW tourism at risk

THE NSW tourism industry is warning that a 25% cut to Destination NSW's operational funding could come at a much higher cost to jobs, businesses and regional communities.

Against this backdrop, the NSW Tourism Association has launched Tourism at Work, a statewide campaign highlighting the jobs that businesses and communities could lose when tourism support is reduced.

"Every dollar cut from tourism has consequences beyond the budget line - fewer jobs, less local spending and fewer opportunities for communities across NSW," Natalie Godward, NSW Tourism Association CEO, said.

"Tourism at Work gives those impacts a face and a voice through the people living them."

Over the coming weeks, the organisation will roll out the campaign, starting with a story from the Deni Ute Muster. *JM*



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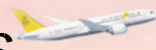


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Window Seat

KIDS take centre stage in Carnival's new YouTube series, which is designed to help travel agents and families understand what's included in a cruise holiday.

The *Tiny Tours* series takes viewers on a tour of *Carnival Adventure*, led by the line's youngest guides - four-year-old Rio, eight-year-old Lani and 10-year-old Mayaan.

The enthusiastic cruisers showcase The Edge activities, dining offerings and options for parents who are looking for adult time.

"There's no better way to showcase a family holiday than through the eyes of a child," assistant vice president sales and marketing Anton Loeb said.

"Tiny Tours lets them take the lead, sharing the parts of a Carnival holiday they love most, while showing parents just how much there is to enjoy onboard together."

Watch the series on CCL's YouTube channel [HERE](#).



Muster up some tourism



TOURISM and Events NT hosted its NT Muster 2026 roadshow across Melbourne, Brisbane and Sydney last week, bringing together 20 operators from the Top End.

The event saw brands such as AAT Kings, Journey Beyond and Kakadu Tourism meet with agents in small-group appointments as they showed off their latest product offerings.

In addition, the events provided opportunities to connect over drinks and canapes, along with the chance to win an NT prize package valued at over \$33,000.

Speaking with **TD** at the Sydney event last Thu, trade marketing manager Melanie Mutch (**pictured**) said that the continuous growth of NT Muster has gone a long way in connecting operators from the territory with east coast trade representatives.

"We've got our major sponsors

out here tonight (Airnorth, Bamurru Plains - An Intrepid Stay, Journey Beyond); I think they're reflective of the investment and their confidence in the Territory as a destination," said Mutch.

"In the past two years, we've had more networking-style appointments done in eight-minute allotments.

"And this is creating an atmosphere [for] these better connections and relationships between the operator and the trade," Mutch added. *JB*

QTIC doubles up

THE Queensland Tourism Industry Council (QTIC) has bolstered its leadership team with the appointments of Amanda Ronan-Hearn as head of industry capability and Steve Guise as head of industry engagement and partnerships.

Ronan-Hearn has been with QTIC since Mar last year, previously serving as industry capability manager.

She also worked as a senior policy advisor for Queensland's former Minister for Tourism and Sport, Michael Healy.

Guise joined the QTIC team in Sep 2024 as commercial and partnerships manager, previously working with the Brisbane Economic Development Agency as head of partnerships.

QTIC is currently on the hunt for a head of corporate affairs. *JB*

Vale Sally Balcombe

VISITBRITAIN and the entire British tourism industry is mourning the passing of the organisation's former chief executive officer Sally Balcombe.

The much-respected tourism executive led VisitBritain and VisitEngland for more than seven years, first as chief executive of VisitBritain from 2014, and then as head of both organisations from 2016.

She was hailed by VisitBritain as having provided outstanding leadership during a period of significant change for the tourism industry, which included the first few years of COVID-19.

Balcombe was also, at the time of her passing, a non-executive director of global travel club Mr & Mrs Smith. *MS*

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RBA surcharge impetus to change

EXCLUSIVE

WORLD360 Rewards is positioning itself as a flexible alternative to traditional airline and bank loyalty programs, allowing Australians to earn and redeem points across a broad range of travel products.

Clinton Hearne (pictured), executive general manager of customer loyalty at World360 Rewards, said the Flight Centre Travel Group program was designed to give members greater freedom and help them travel sooner.

"You earn and redeem on all travel, meaning members aren't locked into a single airline carrier," Hearne told *Travel Daily*.

Members can earn and redeem across more than 500 airlines, 900,000 hotels, 40-plus cruise lines and 900,000 tours, from unique local experiences to iconic international jaunts.

"Crucially, World360 Rewards



works alongside existing programs, letting Australians double or triple dip by earning points on top of their frequent flyer status, cruise perks, and reward credit cards on a single booking," he said.

Hearne said travellers were frustrated by restricted redemption options, complex conditions and the devaluation of points accumulated over years.

"Australians want instant value from day one, earning on everyday spending like fuel or health cover and redeeming across any flight, hotel, or tour worldwide," he continued.

"If a program cannot turn everyday spending into a travel reward within a few months, it is time to look elsewhere."

The comments come ahead of the RBA's 01 Oct surcharge ban, which is expected to reshape the way card issuers fund and structure rewards programs.

Hearne said the changes were unlikely to make traditional programs more generous, with issuers potentially reducing perks, devaluing points or increasing annual fees as they adjust to the new environment.

Consumers should use the change as a prompt to reassess the value of their existing points and look for programs offering greater flexibility, simpler earning rules and better travel benefits, he added.

World360 Rewards members can also access 2,500 travel experts across the Flight Centre Travel Group. ZH

Ponant enriched

PONANT Explorations has announced the addition of three prominent Australians to its 2027 and 2028 enrichment program, giving guests expert insights across culinary, marine science and sport.

Chef and television personality Alastair McLeod will join the 11-day 'Australia's West Coast Odyssey' aboard *Le Soleal*, departing Broome on 29 Jul 2027, from \$17,470 per person.

Coral biologist Dr Emma Camp will accompany a 12-day 'Cook Islands and Society Islands' voyage aboard *Le Paul Gauguin*, departing Papeete on 06 Nov 2027, from \$10,830pp.

Cricket great Ian Healy will join an Antarctic expedition aboard *Le Lyrial* from Ushuaia on 03 Jan 2028, from \$20,220.

The sailings will provide travellers the opportunity to hear personal stories and specialist insights in some of the world's most serene locations. ZH

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THE ISLANDS of
TAHITI



Explora's new duo

EXPLORA Journeys has unveiled two new Journey Collections for the northern winter 2027-28 season, offering contrasting voyages through South America, the Mediterranean and Atlantic Islands set to join the previously announced program.

Explora I will sail from Dec '27 to Mar '28 through Brazil, Uruguay, Argentina, the Falkland Islands and Chile, combining coastal cities with Patagonia's glaciers and wilderness.

Explora V will explore the Mediterranean, North Africa and Atlantic Islands from Dec to Apr, with winter sailings offering quieter ports and overnight stays in destinations including Casablanca and Lisbon.

"Both collections give guests the freedom to explore further, with every detail designed to create a seamless and enriching experience from one destination to the next," Explora president Anna Nash said. *ZH*

Railbookers ups SE Asia

RAILBOOKERS has expanded its Southeast Asia offerings with five new itineraries through Vietnam, Laos and Thailand.

The expansion sees four new journeys through Vietnam and a new itinerary connecting Laos and Thailand by rail.

Railbookers' locally guided approach is at the centre of the new collection.

"Travellers have the independence and flexibility they expect from Railbookers, but with local experts there to guide them, handle the logistics and help them get more out of each destination," Railbookers SVP product Andrew Channell said.

The five new itineraries include 'Essential Vietnam', an eight-day rail journey linking Hanoi, Hoi An and Ho Chi Minh City, and 'Classic Vietnam', an 11-day trip covering Hanoi, Hue, Hoi An and Ho Chi Minh City; and 'Best of Vietnam', a 15-day journey featuring



Vietnam's key northern, central and southern highlights.

There is also the 'Classic Vietnam and the Luxury Vietage Train', a 15-day premium adventure combining classic sights with two Vietage train journeys; and 'Laos and Thailand by Rail', a 15-day multi-country trip combining rail travel, private sightseeing and a Mekong cruise.

"From the energy and history of cities like Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City to the mountain and coastal scenery found throughout the country, there's so much to experience along the way," Channell continued. *ZH*

A golden rename

MAIN Beach Travel has been renamed Travelcall Gold Coast following its acquisition by the Goldman Travel Corporation in Oct last year (*TD* 11 Nov 2025).

The rebrand signals the next step in the partnership, providing the agency with greater buying power, exclusive travel products and global partnerships, while its location and personnel will remain the same.

In a LinkedIn post, the agency thanked its partners for their support, emphasising that those relationships would continue.

Travelcall Gold Coast's new in-store and website branding is active as of today. *JB*

QF launching Asia

QANTAS has kicked off its Asia sale today, with economy fares across 10 destinations starting from \$1,349 return.

This sale ends 21 Sep, for travel beginning Oct. *JB*



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Omio's biz focus

OMIO has announced the global expansion of Omio Business to be used by small businesses, sole traders and freelancers in a bid to tap into the needs of an ever-growing business travel market.

Omio Business consolidates train, bus, flight and hotel bookings into a single platform, giving small teams a global transport and accommodation network with VAT-compliant invoicing, centralised booking history and cost tracking for clearer financial oversight.

Omio chief B2B officer Jean-Francois Bessiron said until now, there has not been a product designed around the specific needs of this market.

"Omio Business gives smaller companies the breadth of choice and financial visibility they need, in a model that fits the way they work," Bessiron said.

Business travel is on course for a record A\$2.4t in spending in 2026, according to GBTA data. ZH

Melbourne sports boom

MELBOURNE'S biggest sporting events are emerging as a key factor in travellers deciding when to travel, for how long and where, new Airbnb data highlights.

During the week of 08-14 Sep 2026, centred on the NFL Rams-49ers clash in Melbourne, visitors booked an average four-night stay, with more than 80% of reservations for two or more guests and over a third for groups of four or more.

"Sport has always been a huge part of Australia's culture, but it's increasingly becoming a reason for people to travel, stay longer and experience more," Airbnb country manager AU/NZ Susan Wheeldon said.

Nearly two-thirds of stays were in suburbs such as Southbank, Fitzroy and Stonnington, as travellers explored coffee laneways, food tours and more.

Many then used Melbourne as a springboard, adding three nights



on average for onward trips to Sydney, Brisbane and regional parts of Victoria.

Melbourne's packed events calendar continued driving repeat visitation, with Mar accommodation searches up almost 15% for the 2026 Formula 1 Grand Prix versus 2025, while forward searches are already up more than 10% year-on-year for the 2027 Australian Open finals.

For local hosts, major events can create concentrated periods of travel demand, with visitors looking for accommodation for longer stays and in groups. ZH

\$100m Adina lift

TFE Hotels has invested \$100 million to refresh its first-gen Adina apartment hotels across Australia and Europe.

The program will upgrade guest rooms, public spaces and amenities, and strengthen Adina's focus on spacious apartment-style accommodation and relaxed Australian hospitality.

Adina Darling Harbour has been transformed into a contemporary harbourside retreat while Adina Melbourne is also in the midst of a multi-million-dollar refurbishment of its 155 rooms.

"The Adina brand and experience are evolving as travellers increasingly look for hotels that can provide both the living experience with full hotel services and amenities," TFE Hotels CEO Anthony Ritch said.

Additionally, works are underway at Adina Frankfurt Neue Oper, while Adina Budapest has also just completed a nine-month upgrade. ZH

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Moxy's snowy debut



MARRIOTT Bonvoy has announced the debut of its Moxy Hotels brand in Niseko in Japan, with the opening of the 310-key Moxy Niseko Village.

Located in the Niseko Village ski resort at the base of Mount Niseko Annupuri, the hotel offers direct ski-in and ski-out access, making it an ideal year-round base for winter sports as well as hiking, cycling and golf during the green season.

The hotel features three distinct dining and social venues, including the Moxy Bar, and a 24/7 fitness centre, while the rooms offer a bold, modern design focused on functionality and comfort.

"Moxy Niseko Village reflects the evolution of travel today, where guests are seeking authentic destinations, flexible experiences and meaningful opportunities to connect," said Cristiano Rinaldi, chief lodging product & services

officer, Asia Pacific excl. China, Marriott International.

"This opening brings the brand's playful social energy to one of Japan's most celebrated mountain destinations, creating a stay experience that is approachable, design-forward and deeply connected to the destination."

The opening of Moxy Niseko Village coincides with the launch of a new eight-person gondola from Dec 2026, doubling uplift capacity and enhancing access to more than 30km of ski terrain. *JM*

Asia assembles

MSC World Asia has successfully completed her sea trials, putting her on track for her Dec debut.

She will now receive final touches at Chantiers de l'Atlantique shipyard in Saint-Nazaire, France.

See more in today's issue of *Cruise Weekly*. *JB*

ATIA UPDATE

from Dean Long, CEO



THIS weekend, I had the pleasure of attending the ATAC Future Focus Conference in Sydney, as the group celebrated

40 years of supporting travel businesses.

It was a strong reminder of what makes independent agents so important to our industry.

You build your agencies through trust, relationships and practical knowledge.

You also carry the weight of constant change, often while still serving clients, managing staff and protecting margins.

That is why the proposed changes to credit card surcharging were front and centre in so many conversations.

There is no single answer that will work for every business.

A large agency, a home-based advisor, a regional storefront and a specialist cruise, a wholesale or touring business will all need to approach the issue differently.

The feedback I received on ATIA's fact sheets (which can be accessed [HERE](#)) was

encouraging because that was exactly the intent: not to tell members there is one solution, but to clearly step through the main options, risks and considerations so each business can make an informed decision.

That practical support matters for all our members.

On Sun and Mon, the team from VisitBritain was also in Sydney, looking at how to work more closely with the local industry to rebuild visitation and spend.

Having chief executive officer Patricia Yates in market across Australia and New Zealand sends a clear signal that Britain sees the value of this market and the role Australian travel professionals play in converting interest into bookings.

For independent agents, that is the opportunity.

Clients may have more information than ever, but they still need advice, confidence and someone who can turn intent into the right itinerary.

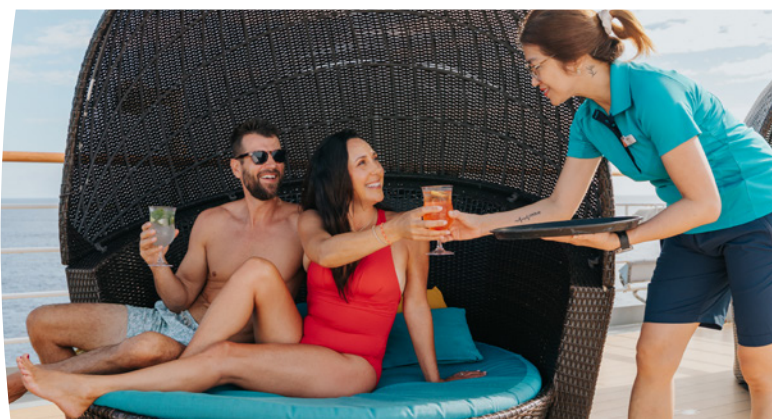
Whether it is payments, product, destination growth or client confidence, ATIA's focus remains the same, giving members the information, representation and support they need to keep building strong travel businesses.



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Malaysia Airlines hosts elite trade travel partner evening

MALAYSIA Airlines recently celebrated the strength of its travel trade partnerships across Australia and New Zealand at an exclusive elite trade partner evening at CIRQ restaurant at Crown Sydney.

Bringing together approximately 100 leading travel advisors, agency partners and industry stakeholders, the evening recognised the outstanding contribution of valued trade partners while highlighting the airline's continued growth ambitions across the region.

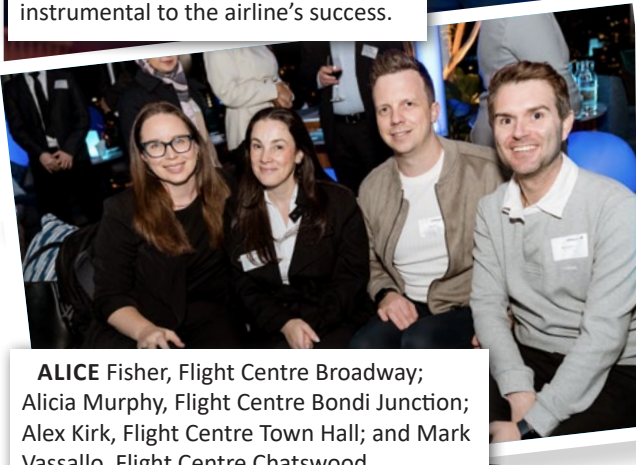
Guests enjoyed exceptional hospitality, network and product updates, and the chance to win an incredible selection of prizes.

With ANZ remaining strategically important markets, Malaysia Airlines continues to strengthen connectivity, enhance its customer proposition and invest in network and fleet development.

From increased services to the A330neo, the airline is creating more opportunities to connect travellers seamlessly via Kuala Lumpur, all underpinned by the warmth of signature Malaysian hospitality.



DERSENISH Aresandiran, chief commercial officer of airline business from Malaysia Aviation Group, thanked travel trade partners for being instrumental to the airline's success.



ALICE Fisher, Flight Centre Broadway; Alicia Murphy, Flight Centre Bondi Junction; Alex Kirk, Flight Centre Town Hall; and Mark Vassallo, Flight Centre Chatswood.



MALAYSIA Airlines' Australia team celebrating growth across the Australian market.



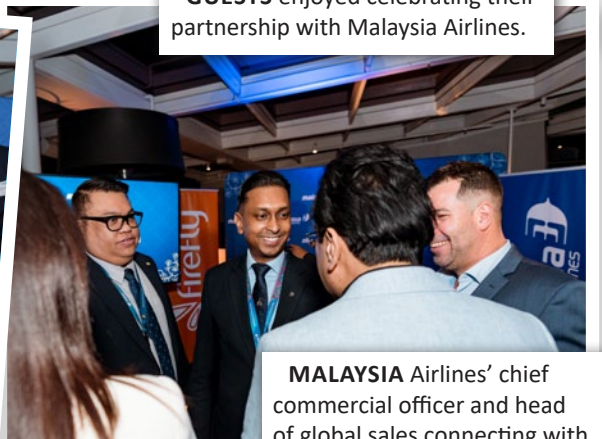
THE itravel team: Steve Labroski, Melissa Devlin, Agnes Tye, and Joe Karbo.



GUESTS enjoyed celebrating their partnership with Malaysia Airlines.



THESE lucky winners took home prizes to Malaysia, Japan and the Maldives.



MALAYSIA Airlines' chief commercial officer and head of global sales connecting with valued trade partners.



'UNDERTOURISM' PLAN DELIVERS RESULTS

INSIDEJAPAN exceeded its goal of doubling room nights across five emerging destinations in the country last year, thanks to its new 'undertourism' strategy.

According to the tour operator's newly released 2025 impact report, one in 10 trips featured one of the regions, with Toyama being particularly successful.

The strategy also generated more than \$502,400 in visitor spend across the destinations, which included Nagasaki, Yamaguchi, Aomori and Inuyama.

InsideJapan has now set a new goal to more than double its 2026 target, aiming to book 2,500 room nights across the destinations.

As of Aug, the company had already met 73% of the target.

Meanwhile, the 'undertourism' strategy is now being explored across other InsideAsia destinations, such as South



Korea, India, Vietnam & Thailand.

"We wanted to demonstrate that 'undertourism' could be more than an idea - that a tour operator could actively influence where people travel and, in doing so, help destinations battle urban migration and preserve culture while improving the experience for travellers," Inside Travel head of impact, Rob Moran said.

"We wanted to build on the momentum and grow positive impact...the results so far in 2026 show that travellers are increasingly willing to look beyond Japan's best-known destinations, creating opportunities for communities while offering our customers a different experience of the country," he said. *JHM*

Regional rise

WITH spring holidays just around the corner, Booking.com has revealed the top searched destinations for Aussies, with regional towns gaining ground.

While Sydney was again at the top of the list, followed by Melbourne and the Gold Coast, Geelong leapt up nine places to 24th.

Meanwhile, Port Stephens, Townsville, Launceston, Byron Bay, Newcastle and Maroochydore also all climbed the rankings.

The shift reflects recent data from Booking.com, which showed 43% of Aussies are now planning to avoid overcrowded cities.

The most interesting growth came from emerging destinations in Bali, such as Uluwatu, which jumped eight places, and Sanur, which moved up seven spots.

"Aussies are continuing to evolve how they approach sustainability, actively choosing destinations that align with their budget and travel preferences while avoiding overcrowded spots," Booking.com's Todd Lacey explained. *JHM*



CX trials AI tech

CATHAY Pacific is set to trial Google's AI-powered contrail mitigation tech, making it the first airline to test contrail avoidance on ultra-long-haul flights.

Google's Operation Blue Skies project aims to help airlines avoid contrails, the cloudy trails created when water vapour condenses around soot particles in jet exhaust (*TD* 25 Aug 2026).

New AW ethical elephant encounters

ADVENTURE World has added new itineraries to its collection of responsible journeys, launching a new four-day tour in Vietnam with a special spotlight on cruelty-free elephant tourism and cultural discovery.

The immersive 'Vietnam's Highlands and Elephants' tour takes guests across Buon Ma Thuot, Yok Don National Park and Lak Lak in the Central

Highlands, featuring a full day with Animal Asia's landmark ethical elephant project.

Participants will be able to admire the gentle animals as they bathe and forage in their natural habitat, with commentary from expert guides and elephant guardians.

A direct contribution fee is integrated into every booking.

Available for travel from Oct 2026. *JHM*



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MONEY

WELCOME to Money, *TD's* Tue feature on what the Australian dollar is doing.

AU\$1 = US\$0.71

DURING the week, the Aussie dollar reached a four-month high, rising to US\$0.72 on Wed off the back of an inflation warning from the RBA.

The AUD also hit a two-year high against the euro (€0.62) and close to a 13-year high against the Kiwi dollar, trading at NZ\$1.23.

Since then, the AUD slid by 0.73% on Mon due to a drop in big tech shares, as well as the attack from the Houthis rebels.

Wholesale rates this morning.

US	\$0.71
UK	£0.52
NZ	\$1.23
Euro	€0.61
Japan	¥110
Thailand	฿23.71
China	¥4.79
Jetfuel	US\$181.46/bbl
Canada	\$0.99
Bitcoin	฿0.00009104

KE makes the move

KOREAN Air (KE) will transition all Asiana Airlines bookings and flight numbers, ahead of the integration of the two airlines in Dec (*TD* 15 May 2026).

Running from 02 Nov through to 03 Dec, KE will operate a phased re-accommodation process, converting Asiana flight numbers (OZ) to KE flight numbers, with changes applying to all pax on existing bookings departing on or before 17 Dec. *JB*

McLachlan aboard Ama



MAT McLachlan Battlefield Tours founder Mat McLachlan recently completed a preview voyage aboard AmaWaterways' *AmaLyra*, as he finalised the 'D-Day Anniversary Cruise 2027: Paris to Normandy' itinerary.

McLachlan visited key sites including Richard the Lionheart's 800-year-old fortress, the remains of the Mulberry floating harbour at Arromanches and the Bayeux Commonwealth War Cemetery.

Other highlights included Omaha Beach, a German bunker responsible for destroying six Allied tanks on D-Day, and the Canadian landing beach at Juno.

"My experience on board *AmaLyra* was fantastic and the extra layer of history we will add with our Mat McLachlan History Cruise experience will make this an exceptional journey," McLachlan enthused.

The eight-day trip will mark the anniversary of D-Day in Jun 2027, with two full days dedicated to viewing the beaches, offering

guests access to more historic sites than a standard itinerary.

Cabins are selling quickly - for more details, click **HERE**. *JM*

Pictured: McLachlan with *AmaLyra* in the background.

Choice grabs four

CHOICE Hotels APAC has added four Hobart properties to its global reservation platform, welcoming Lenna of Hobart, Salamanca Suites, Salamanca Terraces and Hobart Waterfront Apartments to its lineup.

All four properties are located on Hobart's waterfront and within the Salamanca precinct, placing guests within walking distance of galleries, restaurants and other attractions.

Each property will remain independently owned, operated and branded, with the partnership providing them access to Choice Hotels' expansive global reservation and distribution network. *JB*

Island-hop flights

TRANSNUSA has launched its inaugural nonstop flight between Bali and Phuket, seamlessly linking two of Southeast Asia's most popular beach destinations.

Using an Airbus A320, the new route operates four times weekly on Mon, Wed, Fri and Sun, and will be boosted to a daily service beginning 03 Oct.

"This route was established to boost tourism in the region, create new economic opportunities, and further strengthen TransNusa's hub in Bali," Datuk Bernard Francis, TransNusa Group CEO, said.

"By providing a direct link, we make it easier than ever for global travellers to experience the unique cultures of Phuket, Bali and beyond Bali in a single itinerary," he added. *JM*

Explore gets sweaty

EXPLORE Worldwide has partnered with NSW Triathlon, acting as the organisation's official adventure travel partner for the 2026/27 season.

As part of the partnership, Explore Worldwide has naming rights for the following events: Explore Worldwide Run Forster, Explore Worldwide Red Line Games, and Explore Worldwide Western Sydney Lakes.

The travel company will also receive recognition at several major events around the state, including the Husky Running Festival, Husky Triathlon, Port Stephens Triathlon, Grand Pacific Marathon and more.

Selected events will include branded activations, such as Recovery to Discovery and Choose Your Adventure. *JB*



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