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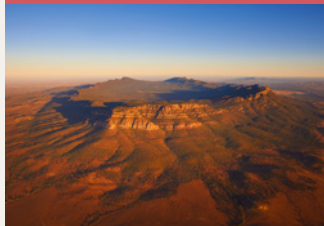
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Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today features nine pages of news, a cover wrap from **Journey Beyond**, and a photo page from **Uniworld** and our **Luxury** page, plus a full page from **Entire Travel Group**.

Earn an outback trip

AGENTS can earn themselves a spot on a nine-day famil when booking clients on Outback Spirit. See more on the **front page**.

TC posts big lift in profits

TRAVELLERS Choice has reported a \$3.11 million pre-tax profit for 2025/26, up 54% year-on-year, with \$2.85 million to be returned to member shareholders in a record annual rebate.

MD Christian Hunter (pictured left with TC chairman Trent Bartlett) said the result was an "exceptional performance" despite disruption from the Middle East conflict during the second half of the financial year.

"Australians remained typically resilient and determined to travel," Hunter said

"Nevertheless, revenue was impacted as customers re-evaluated departure dates, routes and destinations.

"This was offset by the revenue growth that has flowed from the steady expansion of our national network, which has welcomed around 24 new members over the



past two years."

Hunter said the result allowed Travellers Choice to continue investing in new member services, including leadership development and a business intelligence tool.

The group is also developing an AI initiative that will enable users to live search preferred product databases and automatically curate customer itineraries.

Hunter added forward sales remained strong despite a softening in departures for the first half of 2026/27.

"The post-pandemic trend for Australians to treat travel as an essential item appears to be holding up.

"As a result, while we have noted a softening of departures for the first half of 2026/27, our overall forward sales remain strong," he said. ZH

Entire talks Swiss

ENTIRE Travel Group's Swiss Travel provides agents exclusive deals on rail journeys and alpine experiences in Switzerland.

See more on the **back page**.

UK extends CTM

CTM has extended its travel management arrangements with three UK Government customers, forecast to generate £105 million (A\$198m) in total transaction value (**TD** breaking news).

The Home Office contract has been extended to Aug '27, while agreements with the Scottish Government and Cabinet Office will run through Sep and Aug '27 respectively, covering travel services across multiple public-sector organisations. ZH



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Wednesday 16th Sep 2026

Lindblad purchase

LINDBLAD Expeditions Holdings has announced a majority purchase of White Desert and Echo Charlie.

White Desert describes itself as the ultimate bucket-list adventure with Antarctic itineraries selling for upwards of US\$100,000.

Lindblad will also support the launch of a brand-new offering in Echo Charlie that will fly clients to the far corners of the globe in a restored DC-3 vintage aircraft.

"While this is the largest transaction in the history of the company, it is much more than a business deal - it is a powerful partnership between two businesses that have spent decades pushing the boundaries of what experiential travel can be," Lindblad Holdings CEO Natalya Leahy said.

The 60% majority stake in White Desert and Echo Charlie sold for about US\$61 million (A\$85m), plus roughly US\$6 million for cash on the balance sheet. ZH

Aussies seeking higher-value bookings

EXCLUSIVE

QUARK Expeditions has seen a sizable 22% year-on-year increase in sales for the APAC market over the last 12 months, despite a slower recovery from the impacts of the Middle East conflict than other regions.

Speaking with *Travel Daily* before appearing on stage at Cruise360 this week, global president Sam Seward said the growth had been accompanied by a swing towards higher-value bookings, longer itineraries, and a desire for more premium suites.

"The Australian consumer seems to be coming out shooting and looking for a more significant investment," Seward said.

Globally, Quark has also enjoyed an "extraordinary two years" of bookings growth, so much so that the expedition brand pulled the trigger on moving forward its 2028/29 Arctic and Antarctic itineraries (*TD* 24 Jun 2026).



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"We had to go early because of the strength of demand led by our Antarctica sailings, which are really our core itineraries.

"These sold so well that we were getting quite a lot of pressure from the trade and repeat guests looking for early access to really premium suites and *Ultramarine* - they even wanted to be wait-listed."

Seward believes that surge in interest for its product is in part down to demand catching up to capacity in the polar expedition space after a rapid expansion of hardware in 2019 and 2020.

"We are very happy to be riding that at the moment," he added.

Fresh from inking a 10-year partnership with APT Travel Group on a joint vessel project with the Travelmarvel brand (*TD* 14 Sep 2026), Seward also revealed that Quark is actively investigating adding another ship to its fleet, with the precise model still to be determined.

"For our next project, we are talking to a few parties about either collaborating on a part-year charter - just like the [agreement] we have with APT - where we would work with them to optimise the expedition spaces and the whole guest experience from beginning to end," he said.

"We do also have some active conversations about a year-round arrangement as well, so we have got a few irons in the fire." AB

Pictured: Seward in Sydney yesterday with regional sales director APAC, Tenille Hunt. AB



Asia

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Help your customers save on flights to Bangkok, Singapore, Bengaluru and beyond. Hurry! Ends 21 September.*

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*Sale ends 11.59pm (AEST) 21 September 2026, unless sold out prior
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Aussies' UK visits primed for surge

AUSTRALIAN travellers are currently worth around A\$3.8 billion to the British economy each year, delivered through just over 1.1 million trips.

Speaking with *Travel Daily* yesterday while on a trade mission in Australia, VisitBritain CEO Patricia Yates said that while the latest figures were "slightly down" on what the DMO had hoped for because of Middle East disruption, she was bullish about a return to form from the Aussie market to hit future targets.

"The market is coming back with really strong growth...and we [expect] the value to grow by 2030 - that's up to A\$4.16 billion each year and around 1.4 million visits," Yates said.

Reflecting on Project Sunrise launching flights between Sydney and London from Oct next year, Yates said she hoped the service would "create a buzz about Britain" and bring the Australian



market closer & more accessible.

"The hope with Qantas is that it won't just be about selling more tickets for the airline...and that even people who decide not to go on that plane - I hope lots of people do go on that plane - will put Britain on the travel list.

"Greater air connectivity drives travel in general because the more flights there are, the more affordable the destination is, and of course we have Emirates and Qatar Airways operating flights into regional destinations such as Manchester," Yates added.

"[These services] really help people reach our growing

regional destinations."

VisitBritain's trade mission this week included representatives from a variety of emerging regions, with Yates highlighting the importance of funnelling more Aussies outside of London to see highlights in the north, such as the growing tourism hubs of Manchester and Liverpool.

"Manchester has a second airport now and travellers can do open-jaw flights with Emirates into and out of the city, which now has a real vibrancy about it.

"It has a huge student population which always adds to the city's appeal and...the reopening of Manchester Town Hall is also an important story being told in the city.

"But you can't mention Manchester without Liverpool, which is seeing its cruise business really growing, and visitors heading to the waterfront at Royal Albert Dock," she added. *AB*

IE schedule changes

SOLOMON Airlines is today moving to a single-aircraft international operation until 30 Nov, and again from 01 Feb 2027, following the absence of its second Airbus A320, H4-SIB.

The plane is expected to return to service in Dec, allowing the airline to increase flying over the peak period before completing its lease obligations.

For Aussie travellers, Brisbane-Honiara will operate three times weekly, while Brisbane-Santo remains twice weekly, with its second service moving from Tue to Sun, subject to approval.

The direct Brisbane-Munda Fri service is unchanged.

The airline cited rising fuel costs, economic conditions and changes in forward demand alongside the fleet constraints (*TD* 03 Sep 2026)

"We recognise that changes to scheduled services can affect our customers travel...we sincerely regret any inconvenience," CEO Matt Findlay said. *ZH*

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Wednesday 16th Sep 2026

Europe beyond summer

MORE Australians are extending their European trips beyond the summer season in search of better value, fewer crowds and more bearable weather.

According to new data from Webjet, 12.3% of its 2026 European bookings were for May, on par with the peak months of Jul (12.6%) and Aug (12.5%), in addition to Sep accounting for 11.4% of all Euro bookings.

Solo travellers are leading the way in shoulder season travel, making up 55% of bookings during May and Sep this year, in comparison to couples, which accounted for 39% and 35% respectively, while families only made up 3% and 4% in May and Sep respectively.

"Australians are becoming more considered about when they travel, particularly when travelling either side of the traditional European summer peak can offer better value, fewer crowds



and milder weather, without compromising on the destinations and experiences they've travelled for," explained Nicole Sheffield, CEO and managing director of Webjet Group.

"With cost of living still front of mind, we're seeing travellers look beyond the traditional peak periods and plan further ahead to make their travel dollar go further," Sheffield added.

"Booking early can also open up more choice across fares, airlines and travel dates, giving travellers greater flexibility to find an option that works for their trip and their budget." JB

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EY goes Beyond

ETIHAD Airways has unveiled its Beyond Borders initiative, including revamped cabins in its fleet of Airbus A330neo aircraft.

Entering service Sep 2027, the new configuration will have four first class cabins, each with closing doors, a 32-inch screen, personal storage and a personal powder station.

Its business class will feature 24 lie-flat seats, all with direct aisle access, personal stowage and sliding doors.

There will be 252 seats in economy, each equipped with 13.3-inch, 4K screens, personal chargers and 32 seats with four extra inches of legroom. JB



TransNusa to MEL

TRANSNUSA Aviation has announced it will launch four weekly flights between Melbourne and Bali from Oct, adding more than 70,000 seats annually to the route.

The airline will operate Airbus A320s, with flights departing MEL on Mon, Tue, Thu and Fri.

TransNusa will become the sixth airline serving the route.

The news comes as Melbourne Airport reports a 1.6% dip in Aug passengers numbers. ZH

QF innovates ADL

QANTAS has opened its new Product Innovation Centre in Adelaide, designed to accelerate delivery of digital experiences on board its flights.

Fifty employees have already begun working in the office, with QF looking to recruit 40 more roles, partnering with Adelaide University to adopt graduate recruitment pathways. JB

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Catch up on our previous Getaway episodes from Saturday 29 Aug & 05 Sep on YouTube to complete the quiz and simply make a booking by Friday 11 December, you'll automatically go into the draw to WIN ONE OF TEN PLACES on our hosted Canada famil, departing Sydney 15 September 2027.

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Moto revs up Indo

THE InJourney Tourism Development Corporation (ITDC) has launched packages for the Pertamina Grand Prix of Indonesia on 9-11 Oct, with options starting at \$640.

Australian MotoGP premier authorised sales agent Wendy Brockbank told **Travel Daily** the race had proved popular with her clients, who have taken advantage of official ticket packages offering access to experiences like team garage visits, guided paddock tours, pit lane walks and Q&As.

"Indonesia offers fans the perfect opportunity to turn their MotoGP weekend into a full getaway," Brockbank said.

"Alongside world-class racing, visitors can immerse themselves in rich Indonesian culture, enjoy incredible food, beautiful beaches and plenty of sightseeing options."

According to ITDC, last year's race generated Rp4.9 trillion (A\$388 million). ZH

QF, VA report solid earnings

QANTAS Group and Virgin Australia have posted substantial earnings in FY26 despite significantly higher jet fuel costs, according to the ACCC's latest domestic airline competition report released this week.

Qantas reported underlying EBIT of about \$2.35b, down 11% year-on-year, while Virgin's underlying earnings rose 13.4% to \$753m.

WWT springs up

WENDY Wu Tours (WWT) has launched its Spring Travel Sale, with savings of up to \$3,500pp on select 2027 and 2028 group tours.

In addition, travellers can add a city layover from \$259pp twin share, as well as receive an additional \$100pp saving upon joining the Loyalty Club.

The sale covers departures across Asia, Europe, Africa, South America and Antarctica, and is available to book until 29 Oct. JB

The ACCC said resilient passenger demand, higher fares, capacity adjustments and advance fuel-cost arrangements supported the results.

Jet fuel prices were almost 50% higher in late Aug than in Feb, while domestic seat capacity fell 2.3% year-on-year in both May and Jun.

QF led Jul on-time performance at 81.4% with Virgin Australia at 76.3% as industry punctuality fell to 78.4% and cancellations remained at 1.5%.

With airlines filling more than 80% of seats, the ACCC said further capacity reductions could place upward pressure on airfares, depending on commercial decisions and ever-fluctuating fuel prices.

The report also highlighted Western Sydney International as a potential opportunity for new airline entry, with passenger services due to begin in Oct. ZH



Window Seat

IMAGINE relaxing at home only to hear your boss's voice coming from your lounge room all of a sudden.

That was the recent experience of Bunnik Tours' staff, who were startled to hear founder Dennis Bunnik's voice emerging from their TV when the brand's new advert went live last week.

Currently doing the rotation on channels 9 and 7 on the east coast and in Adelaide, the 30-second film features Bunnik on screen (**pictured**), as he provided the voiceover.

Watch the advert **HERE**.



HX

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5% discount on cabins and 10% discount on suites (the "Offer") applies to new bookings made from 15 September 2026 to 03 December 2026 ("Offer Period") for selected HX departures from 01 April 2028 to 31 March 2029. Bookings made outside of the Offer Period will not qualify. Offers with a saving, discount or amount off stated in AUD represents a discount applied to the "From" price quoted in AUD per person based on double occupancy of cabin on the specified sailing or Tour Code. Offer is subject to availability and may be withdrawn at any time without prior notice. Single supplements may apply and applies to all offer occupancies. Offer combinable with HX Price Promise. To obtain Price Promise with this Offer, booking guest MUST request a relevant reduction directly from HX or their Travel Agent (if booked through them), in each case no less than 90 days prior to the scheduled departure.

NYC gets luxurious



NYC Tourism + Conventions, in partnership with United Airlines, took eight Australian travel advisors on a five-night famil to the Big Apple, designed to showcase the breadth and depth of the city's premium offerings.

Across the five days, the advisors got a first-hand look at NYC's luxury accommodation, dining, entertainment and cultural offerings, along with staple experiences such as visits to the Empire State Building, Rockefeller Center and Summit One Vanderbilt.

The group had the privilege of staying in some of NYC's most luxurious hotels, such as Faena and Equinox Hotels, as well as JW Marriott Essex House and Park Lane New York, complemented by property inspections to help them sell the hotels to their clients.

Advisors also spent a day at the American Museum of National History, followed by an afternoon

high tea at Palm Court in The Plaza Hotel.

The group also explored NYC's neighbourhood scene, with dinners at Paris Bar and Gansevoort Meatpacking, and free time to explore the Chelsea Market and Meatpacking District.

Advisors concluded their famil at the United Airlines Polaris Lounge at Newark Liberty International Airport before the trip back to Australia. *JB*

Compass floats out

CELEBRITY Compass, the first vessel in Celebrity River Cruises' fleet (**TD** 30 Jan 2026) has completed a successful float-out at Zwijsenburg shipyard in Rotterdam last week, ahead of her Aug 2027 debut.

This was followed by an 80km sailing along the Bergsche Maas, arriving at TeamCo shipyard in Heusden on Sat. *JB*

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Peppers clear refresh

MANDALA Hotels & Resorts has completed a multi-million-dollar transformation of the former Mercure Clear Mountain, reopening the property as Peppers Clear Mountain.

Spanning 20 hectares of bushland overlooking the Glass House Mountains, the opening marks a new chapter for the hinterland retreat and forms part of Mandala's broader investment in the City of Moreton Bay.

Now operating within the Accor network, the hotel benefits from Accor's global distribution and the ALL loyalty programme.

Delivered with hospitality design and construction firm Dezign, the refresh creates a cohesive new identity across the property.

Highlights include refurbished rooms, a refined restaurant with



private dining rooms, flexible venues for up to 150 guests, a dedicated billiard room, new gym, refreshed pool deck with glass balustrades, and new porte-cochère and a Chef's Garden.

City of Moreton Bay Mayor Peter Flannery said Peppers Clear Mountain is a testament to the area's growing appeal for leisure and business travel.

"This premium venue is a welcome development for our tourism and major events industry which is experiencing high demand from leisure and corporate guests," he said.

Adrian Williams, Accor's Pacific COO, described the transformation as "a premium new benchmark for Queensland hospitality" as the state heads toward Brisbane 2032. *ZH*

LE makes China tastier

LUXURY Escapes (LE) has announced its newest Signature Series experience in a nine-day China trip, hosted by food personalities Diana Chan and Khanh Ong.

Departing Apr next year, travellers will immerse themselves in the street food markets of Xi'an, eat at a Michelin-starred restaurant in Shanghai and take part in a dumpling making class at Tang Dynasty Palace.

LE China bookings increased by 174% in 2025 and by 53% in the first half of 2026. *JB*

Scoot over to Asia

AUSSIES can enjoy one-way fares to Southeast Asia starting from \$165, thanks to Scoot's new 'Everywhere Sale'.

Available to book until 20 Sep, discounted flights include departures from SYD, MEL and PER to Phuket, Da Nang, Osaka, Seoul, Padang, and more.

For details, click **HERE**. *JM*

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Wednesday 16th Sep 2026

CELEBRATING Uniworld's 50th birthday, Uniworld Australia and New Zealand recently hosted 140 agents and their partners on a double-ship charter on the Nile in Egypt, an iconic destination for both Uniworld and Luxury Gold.

Guests enjoyed seven nights on board both *River Tosca* and *S.S. Sphinx*, cruising from Luxor to Aswan return, visiting all the temples and tombs.

Passengers were accompanied by an Egyptologist throughout their journey, which included a visit to the Grand Egyptian Museum and the spectacular pyramids and Sphinx.

To mark Uniworld's milestone anniversary, guests attended an onboard Golden Party and a traditional Galabeya Party.



GUESTS at Luxor Temple.



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ALICE Ager, Uniworld; Laurin Taggart, TravelManagers; Karryn Bartlett, TravelManagers; Angela Graesser, Wentworth Travel; and Natalie, Lisa Priestley, itravel.



TIFFANY Mestrinho, Uniworld; Mike Causer, Sportslink Travel; and Deana Thomas, Helloworld Lower Templestowe.



JULIA Brunato from MTA enjoying the welcome.



JAX and Garry McLaughlin from Itravel with Uniworld's Jen Pagett.



HIGH tea at the iconic Old Cataract Hotel: Julie Cleary, Travel Masterpiece; Santo Scidone, Helloworld; Shelley Martin, Uniworld; and Lauren Wall, ecrusing.



THE *S.S. Sphinx* and *River Tosca*.



GUESTS with their Egyptologist at Abu Simbel.

Going beyond Peru

THE latest ship in the &Beyond fleet, *Amazon Explorer*, is set to sail in Dec 2026, taking guests through the Peruvian Amazon, with immersive experiences such as guided skiff excursions and night safaris.

Guests will also have the opportunity to enjoy kayaking adventures and community visits, as well as cultural encounters, wellness experiences, and wildlife sightings such as pink river dolphins, three-toed sloths, squirrel monkeys and the elusive jaguar.

The 32-guest *Amazon Explorer* will offer three-, four- and seven-night journeys across both high and low water seasons, with adaptable routing to allow guests to experience the changing waterways throughout the year.

She will offer 12 luxury suites, two superior suites and an 80m² deluxe suite, complete with a private balcony, river views, separate sitting area and bathroom with a bath and shower. *JHM*



SCOTT DUNN RETHINKS TEEN TRAVEL

UK LUXURY travel operator Scott Dunn has released a portfolio of adventures specifically aimed at teenagers across Australasia, Europe, Asia, Africa and the Americas.

"At Scott Dunn, we've spent the past four decades planning every type of family holiday you can think of and one thing has become clear: teenagers are sorely underserved and quite often forgotten entirely by luxury travel brands," Simon Lynch, Scott Dunn's global product and strategy director, said.

"We're changing that this year by launching new itineraries and experiences designed for and by our teenage guests."

The Teens-First Adventures collection of itineraries is based on research conducted by Scott Dunn's teen guests and families.



Data showed that social media significantly influences holiday decisions for teens, with 80% using TikTok and Instagram for inspiration, while 60% also seek recommendations from friends.

Research also found that over 70% of teens give their parents destination ideas, with 40% having successfully changed their parents' minds.

Meanwhile, 50% said travel

decisions are made as a family.

Scott Dunn's trips have been created based on this data, with teens' interests at the heart of the journeys, such as learning to surf in Sri Lanka and glamping at the foothills of Mt Fuji.

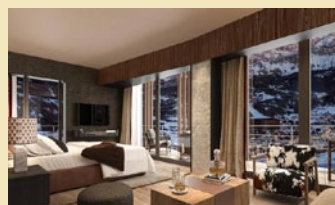
Each trip features an 'Adventure Architect', a local guide trained specifically to engage with teens, bringing destinations to life through their energy & expertise.

Five-star Cortina makes Dolomites debut

THE First Cortina by The Pavilions Hotels & Resorts will open a new five-star property in the Dolomites in early Dec.

Located in the heart of Cortina d'Ampezzo in northern Italy, the property has been transformed into a modern luxury hotel, and now offers 76 rooms and suites, each designed around the region's views.

A number of sophisticated dining venues are on offer, including contemporary Japanese restaurant Zuma and



signature venue Velo, which offers Italian cuisine.

Guests can also relax at the Revivo spa, which offers wellness experiences across two floors and features a panoramic pool, hammam, sauna and treatment rooms. *JHM*

Hidden Palau found

LUXURY catamaran *Four Seasons Explorer Palau* is introducing guests to a new route to access the remote island of Kayangel.

The tiny hideaway features clear waters and sandy beaches, with a stretch of shoreline for exclusive use by ship's passengers.

Guests can enjoy diving and snorkelling in protected marine territory or kayak through the Rock Islands Southern Lagoon. *JHM*

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VOMO Island, Fiji is set to run a three-day culinary series from 23-25 Oct, hosted by Sydney-based chef and Fiji Pantry founder Fuzz Ali. Across the three days, guests will enjoy several events, including a traditional lovo feast, fireside storytelling, a hands-on culinary workshop, a pop-up artisan market and an intimate seafood feast. The initiative will put a spotlight on iTaukei, Indo-Fijian flavours and Fijian seafood.



Adina Melbourne has unveiled a multi-million-dollar transformation, turning the 155-key apartment hotel into a contemporary, experience-led property in Melbourne's CBD. Highlighting the repositioning is the reimagined ground floor, with furniture arranged around the central fireplace, providing a space for guests to relax, work or catch up. The rest of the property will sport new pendant lights, textured wall coverings and bespoke rugs.



Anantara Siam Bangkok Hotel has announced a US\$50 million transformation, celebrating the rich heritage of Thailand and its hospitality. The transformation is highlighted by the reimagining of all 355 guestrooms, suites and villas, which now feature warm teak wood, handcrafted detailing, silk accents, along with marble finishes and bespoke vanities in the bathrooms and ensuites.



Vibe Hotel Canberra has announced a new partnership with WNBL team University of Canberra Capitals, positioning the city as a sports hub as well as stimulating its visitor economy. The property will act as a base for the team throughout the season, with its close proximity to the airport allowing for seamless arrivals and departures for games.



Navera Phuket - MGallery Collection is set to open Q4 this year, marking a new era of locally-inspired luxury hospitality for the island. Located within walking distance of Surin Beach, the property will offer 48 villas and suites, with the choice of one- or two-bedroom accommodation, plus the option for a private pool. It has a range of culinary options, headlined by the Riviera Restaurant.

SYD goes electric



SYDNEY Airport (SYD) is set to roll out its fleet of 50 electric buses, progressively replacing its diesel-powered vehicles.

The fleet will include 25 dual-control airfield apron buses, operating airside to transport passengers between terminals and aircraft, along with 25 Citirider electric shuttle buses, to take passengers, pilots and cabin crew around the airport's precinct.

All of the buses will feature artwork commissioned by Dharawal artist Shane Youngberry and developed in collaboration with SYD's First Nations cultural partner, the Gujaga Foundation.

Titled 'Gamay', the artwork celebrates the culture and connection to country that the Dharawal people have to coastal Sydney, with Gamay being the indigenous name of Botany Bay.

SYD group executive government relations, sustainability and legal, Karen Tompkins, said the new fleet is part of the hub's commitment to net zero for scope 1 and 2 by 2030.

"The 50 new electric buses reduce our scope 1 emissions

from our operations, with the bus being powered by 100% renewable through our power purchase agreement," she said.

"Importantly, they also improve the passenger experience by providing quieter, cleaner and more comfortable transport across the airport precinct." JB

No way, it's Norway

HURTIGRUTEN has launched the 'Norway, Your Way' campaign, with savings across its original and signature voyages, as well as its cruise and tour packages.

On original voyages, travellers can save up to 50% on a second guest when booking before 31 Oct, or receive two complimentary shore excursions per twin cabin, valued at \$926, when booking 'The North Cape Line' or 'The Svalbard Line' signature voyages before 31 Oct.

Until 30 Sep, travellers can earn \$500pp in onboard credit when booking a cruise and tour package, as well as secure a booking with a \$250pp deposit before 31 Oct. JB



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