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Today's issue of TD

Travel Daily today features eight pages of news, a cover wrap from **Journey Beyond**, and our **Luxury** page, plus a full page from **Railbookers**.

Riding the seas

CRUISE-GOERS can now extend their holiday with a train trip, now available with Railbookers across Switzerland, Canada, Alaska and more.

See more on the **back page**.

New Traveltek CEO

TRAVELTEK has announced the current CCO Cressida Sergeant will assume the CEO position as of 01 Oct.

Sergeant will succeed Mal Barret (both **pictured**), who will step down at the end of Nov after seven years at the helm.

Having spent eight years at Traveltek, Sergeant has been pivotal in driving global growth, particularly in North America where the opportunity for cruise technology remains significant.

"My priority for the next chapter is to drive customer efficiency by deepening connectivity for our customers and supplier partnerships," Sergeant said.

"Technology needs to provide more education and transparency to the travel industry, and I know our team and our customers have a fantastic future ahead." ZH



QF confirms NY Sunrise

QANTAS has confirmed Sydney-New York as the second Project Sunrise route, with flights set to begin from mid-2028 (**TD** breaking news).

Tickets for the inaugural service will go on sale from Aug 2027, with the non-stop route set to become the first direct link between Australia's east coast and the US east coast.

The Project Sunrise flights will be operated by specially configured Airbus A350-1000ULR aircraft, fitted with an additional 20,000-litre fuel tank that allows up to 22 hours' non-stop flying.

Qantas will take delivery of 12 aircraft in total, each configured with 238 seats across four cabins.

Qantas Group CEO Vanessa Hudson said adding New York to Project Sunrise was a defining moment for Australia and the US.

"Reaching New York non-stop completes a vision we set



out many years ago, and it's a moment of enormous pride for the thousands of our people who have been working hard to make Project Sunrise a reality," Hudson said.

The flights come as demand for travel between Australia and the US grows, with US visitor arrivals up 5% year-on-year, while Qantas demand to and from New York has nearly doubled since 2023.

Appetite for ultra-long-haul travel has also strengthened, with booking intent rising from 58% to 70% since Feb.

"Flying these distances is only worth doing if our customers arrive feeling their best, and that belief has shaped everything we've built," Hudson said. ZH

Air credit for 2027

NATIONAL Geographic-Lindblad Expeditions is offering air credits of up to \$2,000pp on select 2027 expeditions, covering destinations including Antarctica, Svalbard, Japan and Patagonia.

The offer applies to qualifying bookings made from 15 Sep to 04 Nov 2026.

Eligible trips include 'Antarctica Direct', 'Drake Passage', and 'Coastal Japan'.

Voyages are led by naturalists, cultural specialists and photographers, with select departures featuring National Geographic photographers. ZH

Go Beyond in NZ

JOURNEY Beyond is offering agents the chance to embark on a nine-day fam to New Zealand.

See more on the **front page**.

Save with Etihad

ETIHAD Airways has launched a promotion offering up to 30% off flights across its global network of destinations.

The sale is running until 24 Sep, and applies to travel dates between Oct and Mar 2027. JB

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HAL refreshes Cay

HOLLAND America Line (HAL) has completed a series of enhancements at RelaxAway, Half Moon Cay ahead of the destination's 30th anniversary celebrations in 2027.

New additions include an island-inspired barbecue pavilion and Beach Club experience, alongside upgraded cabanas, clamshells and daybeds, plus renovated bars and eateries.

The Beach Club will offer priority tendering, waiter service, all-inclusive drinks and specialty food offerings.

Select Caribbean sailings will offer savings of up to 50% off fares and free kids' fares. ZH

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ROYAL BRUNEI AIRLINES

Santa Monica visits

SANTA Monica Travel & Tourism (SMTT) connected with the luxury travel trade in Australia on its latest roadshow, which engaged more than 100 key industry leaders across three cities.

Curated VIP events were hosted in Sydney, Brisbane, and Melbourne, with SMTT showcasing its partnership with experiential hospitality company On Location.

Attendees heard how they can combine a Santa Monica holiday with premium access to some of the world's most sought-after sports and entertainment events, including next year's Super Bowl and the 2028 Summer Olympics.

The delegation also showcased Santa Monica's eight distinct neighbourhoods, 5.5-kilometre coastline, and evolving accommodation offering.

Santa Monica's hotel sector has benefitted from more than US\$200 million (A\$281 million) in recent investments and upgrades of late.

SMTT president and CEO Misti Kerns said Australia remains one of the destination's most valuable and strategically important markets. *JM*



TCA eyes China market

EXCLUSIVE

TOURISM Central Australia (TCA) will boost its efforts in attracting Chinese visitors to the region as it looks to diversify its international source markets.

TCA GM Daniel Rochford (pictured) said the organisation had begun a program to increase awareness of Central Australia in China, targeting both inbound tour operators and consumers.

He said Continental Europe, England and the US had been the main sources of Central Australian visitation for many decades, but the rise of Chinese visitors to Australia over the past 18 months presented a new opportunity for the region.

"There's a real opportunity to not just sell Uluru but also the wider destination," Rochford told *Travel Daily*.

Rochford said TCA is working in parallel with the Alice Springs Mayor's office as part of a broader strategy to improve the reputation of the region, which Mayor Asta Hill said greatly affects the experience of not only tourists and operators but also those living in the area.

"We're not trying to pretend any challenges don't exist or try to gloss over them, but the reality is that the whole story of Alice Springs isn't actually being told," Hill explained.

"We're trying to balance those portrayals because when people actually do stop in, they have an



incredible experience because of all of the reasons why this is such an incredible place.

"The incredible natural landscape is just one aspect but [there is] also the opportunity to interact with locals who live here, to see the community for themselves, so it really does a disservice to not only our community, but tourists as well if they are deterred from coming."

Rochford said TCA will also look to capitalise on its 'Stories from the Heart' initiative, which won the national Australian Tourism Award for best marketing campaign this year.

Its follow up, 'Head for the Heart', is a multi-pronged marketing campaign designed to encourage Australians to immerse themselves in the world's oldest continuous living culture, he added.

The news follows a Federal Red Centre Marketing Boost program that will see a total of \$8 million, including \$3.5 million in grants for local tourism into the region (*TD* 07 Sep 2026). *ZH*

Tours just for you

JUST You has added four new escorted tours to its 2027 and 2028 lineup, with itineraries across Europe, Canada and India.

In Europe, solo travellers can embark on the eight-day 'Imperial Bohemia, Saxony & Berlin' tour, starting in Prague and then heading to Dresden and finishing in Berlin.

Alternatively, travellers can go south with the eight-day 'Discover Venice and the Veneto' itinerary, visiting Marostica, Verona, Venice and the Dolomites.

Heading into Asia, the 14-day 'India in Colour: The Deccan Odyssey' tour lets travellers visit Delhi and Mumbai, before hopping on the seven-night Deccan Odyssey train, calling at cities across Rajasthan.

In Canada, the seven-day 'Canadian Rockies: Winter Adventure' allows travellers to see Calgary and Banff, including visits to Johnston Canyon and Lake Louise. *JB*

EVT expands in Asia

EVT Hotels & Resorts' Southeast Asia expansion has picked up the pace, with LyLo Bangkok set to become the brand's first property in the region in 2028.

The 387-bed hotel in the Sukhumvit district will include 354 pods and 33 private rooms, and will be established under a management agreement.

EVT's growth strategy also includes plans for a Bangkok office, the company said. *MS*

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LTC teams up with Tahiti

TAHITI Tourisme and the Luxury Travel Collection (LTC) have signed a landmark partnership ahead of Air Tahiti Nui's new direct Sydney-Papeete service (**TD** 04 Mar), which will begin in Dec (**TD** breaking news yesterday).

The two-year memorandum of understanding will launch a major trade activation program, which will span training, curated product, marketing and events.

LTC's more than 600 travel advisors will benefit from the Tahiti Specialists program, which will provide in-destination immersion opportunities.

The partnership was formalised in Sydney yesterday by Tahiti Tourisme chair Bud Gilroy and LTC general manager Nikki Glading, as Air Tahiti Nui prepares to launch the new flights on 15 Dec.

Gilroy said: "The launch of Air Tahiti Nui's direct service from Sydney is a defining moment for The Islands of Tahiti in Australia." "Signing this MOU with the



Luxury Travel Collection means we arrive at that moment with the network, the expertise, and the reach to make the new route a genuine commercial success - and to introduce discerning Australian travellers to the depth of what our five archipelagos offer," he added.

Glading described the partnership as "incredibly exciting" for LTC's members.

"The Islands of Tahiti are a natural fit for the discerning travellers our advisors serve, and new direct air access opens up an extraordinary luxury destination to the Australian market in a way we haven't seen before," she said.

"For LTC, this partnership is about going beyond access to the destination itself - it's about giving our members the kind of privileged access, knowledge and first-hand experience that allows them to sell it differently.

"We're bringing our members closer to Tahiti, its people and its product, so they can in turn unlock something truly exceptional for their clients." **MS**

Pictured: Tahiti Tourisme's Sarah Elfassy, Caroline Brunel and Bud Gilroy with Nikki Glading and Eileen Madden from Luxury Travel Collection.

MW Tours update

MW TOURS is retaining credit card payments for new bookings from 01 Oct, the operator told travel partners in an email.

However, MW will remove the option for credit card settlement of existing bookings after 30 Sep, while introducing a two-payment credit card cap for new bookings.

This means all balances for outstanding bookings must be settled by transfer from 01 Oct.

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CATO's IWD to Syd

CATO is set to bring its International Women's Day lunch to Sydney in 2027, filling the void left behind by Force for Good.

Slated for 05 Mar 2027 at the Hyatt Regency Sydney, the event will recognise the women who are the heartbeat of the travel industry, providing food, networking opportunities and prizes up for grabs.

Flight Centre Travel Group has been named at the sponsor for the inaugural Sydney Event.

Tickets for CATO's IWD lunch go on sale in Nov, but prospective attendees can register their interest **HERE** to be the first to get their hands on tickets. **JB**

Tierra opens for '26

TIERRA Patagonia, a luxury lodge within the Beckons portfolio, has opened for the 2026 season.

This season will feature new bespoke experiences such as a kayaking expedition on Rio Grey, fly-fishing and a heli adventure.

Guests can also enjoy staple experiences such as hiking, e-biking and puma spotting.

Tierra Patagonia's 40 guest suites offer views of Lake Sarmiento and the Paine Massif.

The opening comes off the back of the property being awarded three Michelin Keys for the second consecutive year (**TD** 21 Sep 2026). **JB**

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September is the perfect time to turn your late bookings into big rewards. From **7-27 September**, every eligible Stuba hotel booking counts towards your regional results, giving you **12 chances to WIN** across Australia.

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RB

Wednesday 23rd Sep 2026

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Window Seat

EUROWINGS is giving people the chance to give their loved ones a gift like none other - their name on an aircraft.

With its 'Name a Plane' campaign, the carrier is inviting travellers to nominate a friend or family member and share a story about them showing kindness or giving back to their community.

The campaign will run until 11 Oct, with a jury to select four winners whose first names will be displayed prominently on Eurowings' newest aircraft, an Airbus A320.

In Dec, the carrier will announce the winners and share their stories.

"We are celebrating the people who make life easier for others," Max Kownatzki, Eurowings CEO, said.

Sri Lanka targets half a million Aussies

THE Sri Lankan government has set a target of attracting 500,000 Australians to the country annually, earmarking the country as a key tourism growth market.

To achieve this goal, Sri Lanka is investing in stronger tourism partnerships, greater marketing presence in Australia and increasing air connectivity with its flag carrier SriLankan Airlines.

Buddhika Hewawasam, chairman of the Sri Lanka Tourism Promotion Bureau, said that the country has plenty of offerings that appeal to Aussies, however it must turn that potential into higher visitation.

"Sri Lanka is close enough for Australians to visit relatively easily, yet different enough to feel like a truly extraordinary international adventure," Hewawasam said.

"Australians love beaches, wildlife, food, history, wellness and adventure - Sri Lanka delivers



all of these experiences within one remarkable island.

"We want to grow from around 80,000 Australian visitors this year towards at least 500,000 visitors annually over the coming years," he added.

At the centre of this drive for Aussies, the tourism bureau is highlighting its diverse offerings for different visitors.

"You can come to Sri Lanka for the wildlife and find yourself captivated by the food, you can come for the beaches and discover thousands of years of history, you can come for wellness and end up on safari," Hewawasam said.

"For Australians who want more from their holidays, Sri Lanka is an extraordinary proposition.

"Our country is safe, has great infrastructure, water you can drink from the tap and a world class health care system."

Sri Lanka's ambitions come off the back of a successful Australian roadshow, attracting over 500 delegates from the travel and tourism industry.

Held across Sydney, Adelaide and Perth, attendees had the chance to interact with Sri Lankan accommodation providers, tourism operators and destination managers.

"This wasn't simply about telling people to visit Sri Lanka - it was about building relationships that ultimately put Sri Lanka into travel agency windows, holiday packages, itineraries, social media feeds and conversations between travel advisors and their customers," said Hewawasam. *JB*

The Islands of Tahiti on Sale

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THE ISLANDS of TAHITI

AIR TAHITI NUI

Wednesday 23rd Sep 2026

Marketing for good

THE European Union (EU) has introduced new anti-greenwashing legislation, ensuring Australian tourism operators avoid using generic environmental claims when marketing their products to European audiences.

Coming into effect on 27 Sep, the EU's Empowering Consumers for the Green Transition Directive will stop companies from using terms such as 'green', 'carbon neutral' or 'environmentally friendly' without verifiable evidence to prove the claims.

It will apply to any Australian tourism businesses promoting experiences, accommodation or destinations to consumers in the EU, including via global booking platforms and intermediaries.

Ecotourism Australia has welcomed the new legislation, saying that it is a testament to operators who work hard to provide authentic eco-friendly and sustainable experiences. *JB*

G'day jumps on BNE '32

G'DAY Group will invest more than \$200 million in regional Queensland ahead of the 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games, with 12 Discovery Parks and Resorts slated for expansion.

The investment includes a \$20 million upgrade of Discovery Parks - Townsville, adding 30 cabins, 30 sites and new visitor facilities, following an earlier \$5 million upgrade that delivered 18 new cabins.

G'day Group CEO Grant Wilkens said the investment would help meet growing demand for holiday parks and resorts ahead of the Games.

"We are excited to develop new and expanded offerings in regional Queensland to welcome both local and international tourists ahead of the 2032 Games," he said.

Further developments are planned at Discovery Parks in Bargara, Mackay, Coolwaters in



CRUISE WEEKLY

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Yeppoon, Noosa, Airlie Beach, Tannum Sands and Lake Tinaroo, as well as across the Queensland Discovery Workstay portfolio.

G'day Group has invested more than \$110 million across regional Queensland since 2024, including the acquisition of Habitat Noosa.

Australian Retirement Trust's (majority owner of G'day Group) chief investment officer Ian Patrick said the investment would support regional jobs and growth.

"We will continue to seek ways to invest at scale for our members' best financial interests and the broader economy," Patrick said. *ZH*

Cleanup on aisle VA

VIRGIN Australia (VA) flight attendants are calling for the return of a dedicated cleaning crew, as many are working extra hours without a break to deal with the mess left by passengers.

The Flight Attendants' Association of Australia (FAAA) said that the lack of food served onboard Virgin Australia services is prompting passengers to bring their own, creating additional deep cleaning work.

Additionally, the FAAA cited that once cabin crew finish cleaning between flights, they eventually have to serve the same food to passengers again.

In contrast, VA's main competitor Jetstar has a cleaning crew, with a full cabin clean done overnight, in addition to disinfecting planes after every international flight.

According to VA, enterprise agreement discussions with the FAAA and TWU "have been continuing productively". *JB*

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Ritz expands APAC

THE Ritz-Carlton Yacht Collection (RCYC) has expanded its APAC reservations team with four new appointments.

Wanda Ferrand is the new reservations manager, who joins from Explora and previously held prominent roles at both Crystal and Amex.

Amelia Lake joins as experience ambassador, marking her first foray in the travel industry.

Meanwhile, Abbey Anderson and Ellie Sayer are the new professional voyage associates.

Anderson joins from Silversea's UK team, where she was a luxury sales professional for almost four years, while Sayer - who also hails from the UK - has experience as a travel advisor.

All roles will be Sydney-based, except for Anderson, who will be based on the Gold Coast.

RCYC's APAC reservation team now comprises of eight members across Australia. *JB*

Get trained on AI

THE Queensland Tourism Industry Council (QTIC) is launching its AI in Action program, designed to help tourism operators leverage AI to benefit their business.

AI in Action comes in the form of six courses, with five focused on AI and one on cyber security.

The first two courses are now available, with the next four to be progressively released.

All courses can be accessed online [HERE](#) at any time. *JB*

BNE waves the flag



BRISBANE Airport's (BNE) Skygate precinct will play host to Game Over, the largest electric go-kart circuit in Queensland.

The multi-level facility will provide go-karting experiences for guests from four years old.

Also in the venue will be an eight-lane ten-pin bowling alley, a range of arcade games and indoor attractions, as well as a dining area.

There will also be dedicated spaces for birthday parties and corporate events.

BNE's executive GM commercial Scott Norris said the addition of Game Over is another step in transforming Skygate into a one-stop precinct, already home to DFO Brisbane and the state's only 24/7 Woolworths store.

"Skygate is evolving into much more than just a shopping

destination - we're creating a place where people can come together to enjoy memorable experiences, whether that's racing friends on the go-kart track or teeing off at the driving range, followed by a bite to eat afterwards."

Norris added: "Every new attraction adds another reason for families, friends, visitors and locals to visit, stay longer and keep coming back."

"We're building a destination that offers something exciting for every age and interest."

Game Over also adds to Skygate's growing portfolio of entertainment offerings, alongside Dinos Alive, Area 51, Golf Central and Landers Pocket.

The new facility will open in 2027, as the airport continues to deliver its \$5 billion Future BNE initiative (*TD* 17 Sep 2026). *JB*

Hurti stays loyal

HURTIGRUTEN has launched its Ambassador Loyalty Month, with members of its 1893 Ambassador Loyalty Program saving an extra 5-10% on new bookings made until 15 Oct.

The promotion is valid for departure dates between now and 31 Mar 2029. *JB*

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Luxe with Windstar

WINDSTAR Cruises MD Helen Beck says luxury in 2026 is increasingly defined by the quality of the experience rather than traditional formality.

"Luxury is very much in the eye of the beholder," Beck told **Travel Daily**.

"It is everyone's own interpretation of luxury."

For Windstar, that means 'casual luxury', with high standards delivered in a more relaxed setting than is often associated with the segment.

"Our approach as a company is relaxed and casual...but that doesn't mean standards are casual - [the] standards of quality, service or food [remain] high," Beck continued. *ZH*



Explora races ahead

EXPLORA Journeys has opened reservations for stays aboard *Explora I* during the Formula 1 Grand Prix de Monaco 2027, taking place from 02-07 Jun.

The ship will be docked 150 metres from the circuit, with guests able to add on a journey before or after the event. *JM*

RSSC SUPERCHARGES EURO PROGRAM

REGENT Seven Seas Cruises (RSSC) has launched four automotive-focused pre- and post-cruise programs across seven European voyages in 2027, as part of an expanded partnership with Motorsport Lab.

Designed for automotive enthusiasts and travellers seeking immersive destination experiences, the new collection showcases the motoring cultures of Barcelona, England's Goodwood Estate and Italy's Motor Valley.

Guests can enjoy supercar and classic car driving, private automotive access, motorsport activities, regional cuisine, and cultural experiences.

Curated and led by Motorsport Lab, the collection includes two distinct Motorsport Magic experiences in Barcelona, House



of Motorsports at Goodwood in England and Italy's Supercar Escape in Bologna.

The lineup kicks off in Barcelona on 26 Jul with the four-day pre-cruise 'Motorsport Magic: Classic Porsche Edition' program, where guests can drive classic Porsches through Catalonia's interior and coastal roads, visit the historic Terramar racetrack and explore the seaside town of Sitges.

Prices start from US\$7,899pp.

"The most meaningful travel experiences connect guests with the people, culture, and passions that define a destination," Wesley D'Silva, president of RSSC, said.

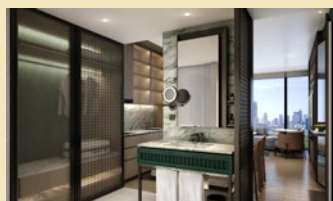
"Through our expanded collaboration with Motorsport Lab, guests can go beyond traditional sightseeing to experience some of Europe's most iconic automotive regions through exclusive access, expert guidance and unforgettable moments." *JM*

Fraser Hospitality offers home away from home

FRASER Hospitality has unveiled Fraser Suites Reserve, a new luxury serviced living brand aimed at global travellers seeking the privacy and ease of home while away.

Designed as private sanctuaries within the city, the properties will offer personalised service and a global wellness program.

The brand's first property, Fraser Suites Reserve Bangkok, will begin welcoming guests in Dec as part of a phased opening, featuring 225 rooms.



CEO Eu Chin Fen said the new offering "draws on our experience in long stays, while responding to the evolving expectations of an increasingly sophisticated segment of travellers accustomed to the world's finest hospitality". *JM*

Supersenang calls Oz

SUPERSENGANG, a boutique hotel on Bali's west coast, has announced it is expanding its international presence, with Australia among its seven key markets.

The property, which offers ocean views and is surrounded by green rice fields, has appointed PR agency Out of Office Office to lead its overseas media and creator relations, targeting Australia as well as the Netherlands and more. *JM*

Tempting Tahiti

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Paul Gauguin
CRUISES

ACCOMMODATION

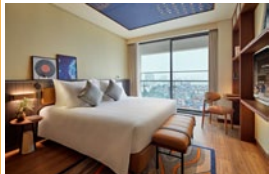
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Club Med Bintan has unveiled its new transformation, with refined accommodation, newly-curated lifestyle spaces and family-focused additions. Making their debut are the Deluxe Themed Rooms, taking inspiration from the island's natural scenery, integrating natural elements and Indonesian textures. The transformation has also introduced the brand's first-ever Amazing Family! Hub, a 300m² facility offering games and activities for all ages.



The Shepherd Mayfair has provided a first look at Fayre, its new signature neighborhood restaurant available to guests from Oct. The menu offers seasonal British produce along with European classics, with dishes such as lobster and prawn brioche rolls, braised beef short rib croquettes, citrus-cured trout and beef Wellington.



Legacy Hanoi - A Fusion Original is opening its doors to guest this month. Located in Hanoi's Ngoc Ha ward, the 218-key property offers a range of Original Rooms, Deluxe Suites, Premium Deluxe Suites and Executive Suites, each containing a private balcony, floor-to-ceiling windows, along with a vintage record player and a selection of vinyls. For dining, guests can enjoy the Moc Loft restaurant serving Northern Vietnamese cuisine.



Yotel Bangkok Sukhumvit has opened bookings for stays from 15 Oct. Located in the Cloud 11 development, the 250-key property is the first in Thailand under the Yotel brand. Each room offers a view of the Bangkok skyline and features smart TVs, mood lighting, reclining smart beds and monsoon showers. Guest service robots will also deliver water, fresh towels and amenities to the room. Fatty's, its rooftop bar and restaurant, will open in Nov.



Minor Hotels has announced the signature property of **Avani+ Hanoi**, bringing 310 keys to the city's Bach Mai Ward. Set to open in 2028, the hotel will form part of the Hinode City mixed-use precinct, offering 1,099 residential and serviced apartments. Hotel facilities will include an indoor swimming pool and deck, a fitness centre, all-day dining and several MICE spaces.

IHG's World Cup win



IHG Hotels & Resorts has been named the official hotel partner of the Men's Rugby World Cup 2027, being held in Australia.

The hospitality giant will use its hotel network to accommodate competing teams, officials and fans travelling to and around Australia for the tournament.

IHG's CEO for Europe, Middle East, Asia and Africa, Kenneth Macpherson, said that this partnership is a great opportunity for the company to capitalise on one of the largest events on the sporting calendar.

"As official hotel partner, we have an opportunity, not only to support that experience in Australia, but also to engage fans and IHG One Rewards members across key international markets before, during and beyond the tournament," Macpherson said.

"With more than 160 million IHG One Rewards members globally, the partnership gives us another meaningful way to deepen loyalty, create distinctive

experiences and introduce IHG to new audiences.

"That value extends well beyond the tournament itself, strengthening consideration and demand across our global hotel network and creating long-term value for our brands, hotels and owners," he added.

The hotel group has an extensive history of supporting rugby across the world, with partnerships including Rugby Australia, SANZAAR, the Six Nations tournament, and the 2025 Qatar Airways British & Irish Lions tour to Australia.

Running from 01 Oct 2027 to 13 Nov 2027, next year's Men's Rugby World Cup will be the largest edition to date, with 24 nations competing across 52 matches in seven host cities. *JB*

Pictured: Kenneth Macpherson; Yasmin Diamond, executive vice president, global corporate affairs, IHG Hotels & Resorts; and Michel Poussau, chief revenue officer, World Rugby.

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