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## Travel taxes facts of life but govts need to take care of the 'golden goose': TAANZ



Julie White

Consultation, communication and an understanding of the booking chain are crucial when governments are considering adding taxes to their countries' tourism sector, says Travel Agents Association of New Zealand (TAANZ) CEO Julie White. She says it is also worth decision-makers considering price competitiveness and remembering that travellers literally have a world of choice.

White's comments come in the aftermath of high-profile tax moves by Fiji and Maldives, both of which drew negative attention from the international travel industry and were changed and/or delayed after feedback.

'Governments are looking at tourism as revenue and everyone understands that, it is their prerogative. It is not the what (tax) it's how it is implemented. We see bed taxes, resort taxes, arrival fees – a lot of countries are jumping on the bandwagon and it's interesting watching it play out.'

She says miss-steps come when government agencies fail to consult with the wider travel ecosystem, particularly when they do not take the contracting process and the time-frames associated with that into account. 'That can cause angst for the industry and consumers need lead time as well.'

White also notes that decision-makers need to be mindful that there is a breaking point in terms of what consumers regard as value. 'Governments do need to be careful – they

*Continued on page 2*

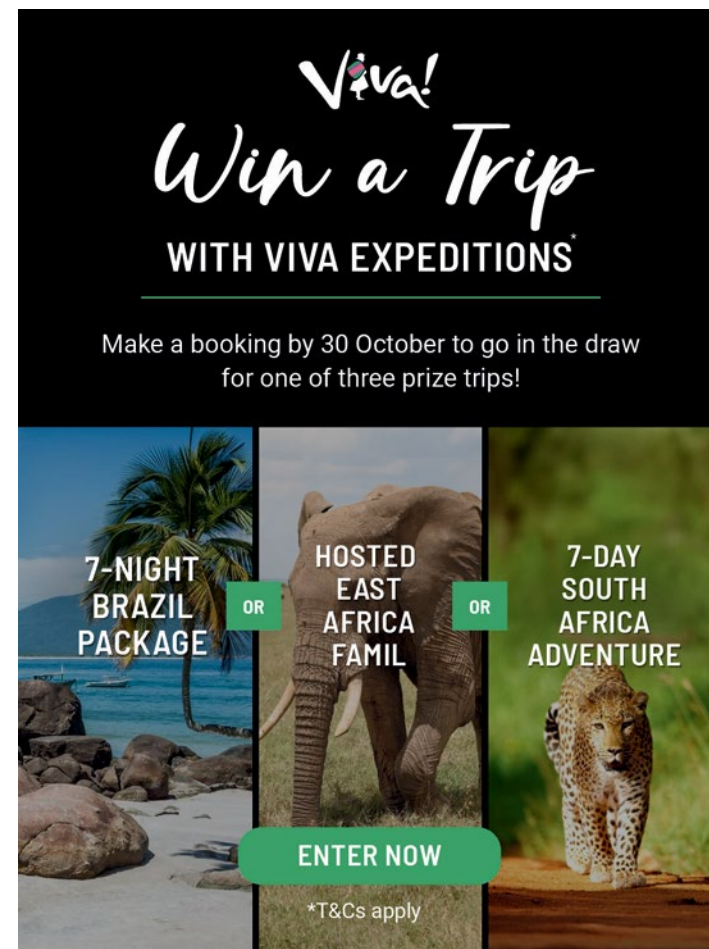


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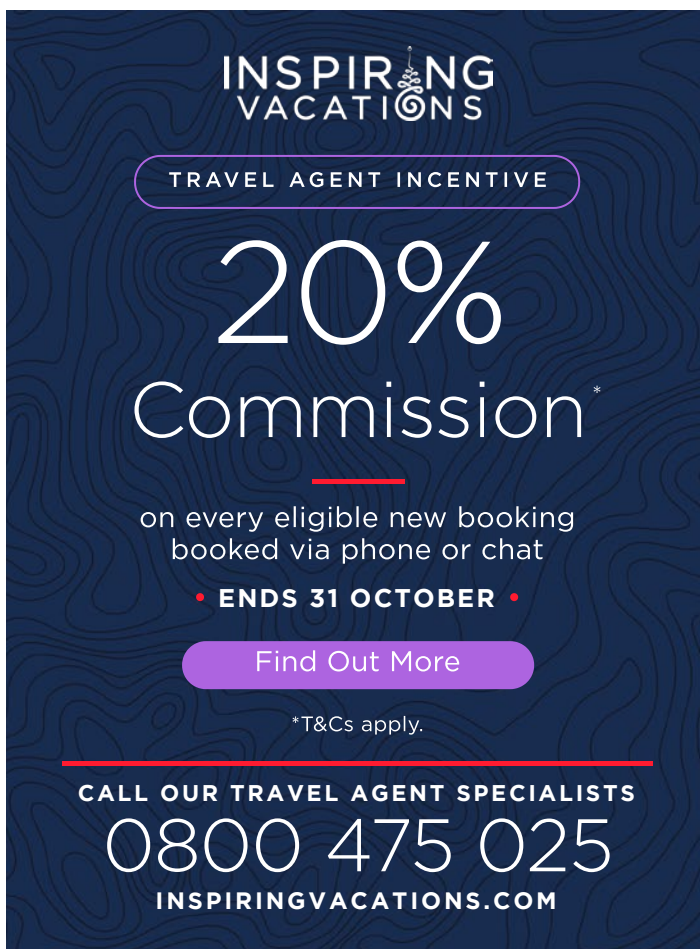
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## TAANZ: Travel taxes facts of life but care needed

Continued from page 1

need to look after the golden goose.'

On another note, White feels travellers will welcome the increased use of biometrics on the Tasman when that is implemented.

'It will make things easier and smoother but people need to be aware they will still need to have the correct documents – including a passport. Agents can help by ensuring their clients are aware of that.'

She says the narrative so far is around airports but she is hoping the further

adoption around biometrics will also include cruise.

Speaking of cruise, White says TAANZ is wishing the sector 'all the best' as the New Zealand season gets into full gear.

'We are a major distribution partner and we value our relationship with cruise. We see great demand from the New Zealand market and that includes close to home cruising – that helps first timers dip their toe in the water.'

TAANZ is gearing up for its AGM on 21 October. Watch for a full report that week.

## Win a dinner with Wendy Wu and Hong Kong quiz

Wendy Wu Tours and Hong Kong Tourism Board are giving agents a chance to win one of five \$200 dinner vouchers at Grand Harbour Auckland, or at a restaurant near to winning agents not in

the Auckland area.

To be in to win, agents need to complete the Hong Kong Quiz before 23 October, when the five winners will be drawn from the correct entries. Enter [HERE](#).

## Flight offer with Outback Spirit

Outback Spirit has introduced a new Fly Free offer. Clients can have complimentary flights to and from their nearest Australian capital city when they book a 2027 tour by 18 December 2026.

Clients on Outback Spirit can explore the Kimberley and other landscapes of Western Australia, connect with the culture of Arnhem Land or head south to Tasmania.

Alicia Triggs, Journey Beyond executive general manager of sales and partnerships, says Outback Spirit is 'adding a little extra lift', with flights included at the start and end of the tour. For example if a New Zealander makes their way to Sydney the trip to



In the Red Centre with Outback Spirit

the onward destination (eg Darwin) is included.

Plus, there are savings on selected tours, including Jewels of the Kimberley & Faraway Bay, Red Centre Explorer, Eyre Peninsula Whale and Seafood Discovery, South Western Explorer and Queensland Hinterland Explorer.

[outbackspirittours.com.au/terms-conditions/](https://outbackspirittours.com.au/terms-conditions/)

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## Adam Armstrong's Scenic appointment

Scenic Group has appointed Adam Armstrong as chief commercial officer, effective 1 November 2026.

Based in Scenic Group's Zug office in Switzerland, he will lead the global commercial organisation for the group's brands – Scenic, Emerald Cruises & Tours and Mayflower – across its global markets.

Armstrong has more than 20 years of senior international experience across the travel and cruise industries. He most recently served as global CEO of Contiki Holidays where he led the business through the challenges of the pandemic and subsequently repositioned the brand for its next phase of growth.



Adam Armstrong

Prior to Contiki, he was managing director of Royal Caribbean Group in Australia & New Zealand, followed by managing director of Silversea Cruises in the Asia-Pacific region.

'Adam brings a strong track record of leading international businesses,

building high-performing teams and delivering growth,' says Glen Moroney, chairman and founder of Scenic Group. 'His experience across both cruising and touring, together with his global commercial expertise, will be a great asset as we continue to expand our portfolio of luxury ocean, river and touring brands.'

## LATAM-Delta joint venture expands

Four years after the launch of their joint venture, LATAM and Delta continue to expand their operations between South America and North America. Between October 2022 and July 2026, the two airlines operated 83,000 flights, offered more than 20 million seats and carried 17.4 million passengers.

This growth is also reflected in the airlines' combined capacity, which is projected to be 31% higher in 2026 than in 2023. Since the agreement began, the airlines have also operated 28 joint routes and added nine new routes to their network.

Today, the JV gives access to more than 300 destinations across the United States, Canada and South America.

The JV between LATAM and Delta continues to expand



Delta provides access to more than 200 destinations in the United States and Canada, while LATAM adds more than 130 destinations across South America.

LATAM Pass members can earn and redeem miles on eligible Delta flights, while Delta SkyMiles members can do the same when travelling with LATAM. Elite members of both loyalty programmes also have access to more than 53 Delta Sky Clubs in the US and six LATAM lounges across South America and Miami.



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## Patagonia over breakfast with Viva

Viva Expeditions is hosting two Patagonia by Land & Sea trade breakfast events in Auckland this November, featuring representatives from Australis Cruises, Patagonia Camp and Estancia Cerro Guido.

The events will showcase how advisors can combine expedition cruising through the waterways of southern Patagonia with time exploring the landscapes of Torres del Paine National Park.

From the sea, Australis Cruises takes travellers deep into Patagonia's fjords and channels, with opportunities to witness immense glaciers up close, visit penguin colonies, walk through wilderness and, conditions permitting, land at legendary Cape Horn.

Advisors will hear about two different ways to experience Torres del Paine on land. Patagonia Camp combines luxury glamping with views, guided



excursions and Chilean cuisine, while Estancia Cerro Guido offers a taste of Patagonian estancia life, from exploring the wilderness and meeting local gauchos to tasting cuisine showcasing locally sourced ingredients.

'Patagonia is one of those destinations where the journey is as incredible as the places visited,' says Viva Expeditions GM, Tara Sutherland.

The events are on Thursday 12 November, 7:30-9:00am at Joe's Garage, Alexandra Park, register [HERE](#), and Friday 13 November, 7:30-9:00am at Viva Expeditions HQ, Rosedale, register [HERE](#).

## Brand USA appoints interim president and CEO

Brand USA has appointed Caroline Beteta interim president and CEO, effective 9 November.

Beteta, who retired in September after nearly three decades as president and CEO of Visit California, brings extensive tourism leadership experience and a longstanding connection to Brand USA, including previous service as chair of its board of directors and acting CEO.

'Brand USA has been close to my heart since its inception,' says Beteta. 'My focus will be singular: securing Brand USA's reauthorisation and ensuring this critical



Caroline Beteta

organisation can continue its mission of welcoming the world to the United States. International inbound travel is vital to our nation's economy, communities and global competitiveness, and I look forward to working alongside Brand USA's board, team and our industry partners to help get reauthorisation across the finish line.'

Beteta succeeds Fred Dixon, who will depart Brand USA on 13 November. He returns to New York City as president and CEO of NYC Tourism + Conventions on 1 December.



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\*Prices and taxes for Economy Class fares are in NZD, correct as of 21 Sep 2026, and are subject to availability and change without notice. T&Cs Apply.

## Back-Roads specials on 2027 tours

Back-Roads is offering savings \$350 per person on eligible 2027 departures when booked through to 18 November 2026.

The saving can also be combined with eligible Returning Guest and Multi-Tour loyalty discounts, unlocking additional value for clients returning to Back-Roads or experiencing more than one tour with the brand.

Adding further confidence for those planning ahead, 70% of the departures included in the campaign are guaranteed.

The increased certainty comes as Back-Roads enters one of its biggest booking periods, with customers typically booking their holidays at least eight months in advance.

Back-Roads Touring director of sales, Trevor Thwaites, says the campaign is designed to give travellers both greater value and confidence when planning their 2027 holidays.

‘That’s why we’re putting the saving front and centre, while also giving



Back-Roads Touring... ‘specials offer value and confidence’

travellers greater certainty around their 2027 departure.’

The campaign comes as Back-Roads continues to reinforce its position as a true small-group specialist, with more than 40 years of experience dedicated exclusively to small-group touring.

With groups of no more than 18 guests travelling in luxury Mercedes Sprinters, Back-Roads’ tours are designed around intimate access and local experiences.

## PACIFIC NEWS IN BRIEF

### FJ resort check-in change

The Fiji Airways Resort Check-In (RCI) service at Radisson Blu Resort Fiji has ceased operations. From today (9 October 2026) guests wishing to utilise the Fiji Airways Resort Check-In service while on Denarau may be directed to either Sheraton Fiji Resort or Sofitel Fiji Resort & Spa, with prior notification to the respective resort teams.

### Giving Fiji hotels

InterContinental Fiji Golf Resort & Spa, Grand Pacific Hotel Suva and Holiday Inn Suva have concluded their September Giving for Good activities, raising a combined F\$60,000 through a charity golf tournament and a month-long fundraising campaign supporting community causes across Fiji. The initiatives formed part of IHG Hotels & Resorts’ annual Giving for Good programme.

## AGENT FAMIL 2027



### Be in to WIN 1 of 6 spots on the Sun Peaks ski famil!

Sun Peaks is a firm favourite with Kiwi travellers for a reason. It is Canada’s second-largest resort, and one of BC’s sunniest, at 2,000+ hours of sun a year.

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With stopovers in Nadi and Vancouver, it’s the perfect famil to sell snow holidays with confidence.

## Sun Peaks Canada

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## Profile

# Black tie dinner at Alcatraz, baseball with NYPD, lunch on the Great Wall

Having a site inspection at the Playboy Mansion in Hollywood, checking out a tower in Alcatraz that the public is rarely allowed to see, and organising baseball games against the New York Police Department in Central Park have all been part of the job for well-known incentive travel practitioner Winnie Fong.

‘Hugh Hefner was on site when I visited the mansion, but he didn’t get out of bed until 11am. I was there at 10 so I missed him,’ recalls Fong.

She says the plan was to hire out the mansion for a group function – it would have happened apart from some media publicity leading to the event being canned.



Fong hosted a group to an ice hockey game in Vancouver



On the job for C&I Travel Specialists... Clair Wilson and Winnie Fong

The visit to Alcatraz ended more productively – with the staging of the first black tie dinner in the prison dining hall.

Other highlights of Fong’s career include a full buffet lunch set up on the Great Wall of China (with table, chairs, linen, wait staff and, to the side, masseuses for neck and leg massages), plus a full buyout of the Guinness Storehouse in Dublin for an evening function.

The recollections come as Fong marks 40 years in the travel industry – most of it working in the conference and incentive sector but also encompassing a memorable diversion or two like a brief stint in retail and later a ‘gap-year’ working as crew for Air New Zealand in 2007. ‘My husband and I wanted a break from the corporate world – he became a full time artist for a year.’

The milestone also coincides with Fong’s decision to leave full-time work – her last job being with C & I Travel Specialists.

Fong actually started her travel career with Mt Cook Line in 1986, working

with inbound groups. In 1991, she went to London for some OE and within a week had a job with Gullivers handling outbound Europe groups before working in the Hong Kong office for two years.

Back in New Zealand she worked at the Auckland Visitor Information Centre, then General Travel (when Don Gunn and Peter Black were the principals).

A major step came in 1997 when she was invited to work with Karen Kennedy at GO C & I. A little later Wayne Harris (a significant name in Fong’s career) joined GO C & I. She left in 2002 and worked with Flight Centre’s CIEvents (‘really only to get a fresh perspective’) and then had a second stint with Harris and GO C&I that spanned a decade. She then started with C&I Travel Specialists, where she has worked for the past eight years.

‘I have loved the people I’ve worked with, especially in the last team (C&I Travel Specialists) – they are a great group.’

She has also enjoyed providing special moments for high achieving clients. ‘It’s about having good contacts and challenging the ground operators to go outside the box. I got pushback on the baseball (in Central Park) but I have managed to organise that three times.’

Fong says she now plans to keep occupied but at a slower pace and is looking forward to a holiday in Sri Lanka, Singapore and Phuket.

‘This will be the first time for many years that I go away with no work laptop and no work phone.’



Great place to organise a baseball game... at Central Park, New York City



Launching a close to home brand at GO C&I with Wayne Harris



## Asia

## Seven more Marriott hotels for Thailand

Marriott International has an agreement with FICO Corporation to bring seven hotels to Thailand. These are projected to add a further 1,262 keys to Bangkok, Pattaya and Phuket. The portfolio deal includes the expansion of the JW Marriott brand and is set to introduce citizenM, Four Points Flex by Sheraton and Series by Marriott to Thailand for the first time.

JW Marriott Bangkok Sathorn is expected to feature 288-keys, with well-being experiences offered through diverse sports and fitness facilities and a lifestyle hub, while citizenM Bangkok Sukhumvit 11 is anticipated to mark the brand's debut in Thailand with 147 keys. Reflecting citizenM's approach to hospitality, the hotel is expected to combine intuitive technology, contemporary design and a new food and beverage venue in Bangkok's Sukhumvit district.

Three Four Points Flex by Sheraton will be strategically located across



Artist's impression of JW Marriott Bangkok Sathorn

Bangkok. Four Points Flex by Sheraton Bangkok Sukhumvit 8 (expected 162 keys), Four Points Flex by Sheraton Bangkok Sukhumvit 14 (130 keys), and Four Points Flex by Sheraton Bangkok Surawong (201 keys) will offer stays close to the city's BTS skytrain network.

Series by Marriott will make its debut in two of the country's most popular resort destinations with the 192-key Easy Planet North Pattaya, Series by Marriott, and the 142-key Easy Planet Phuket Patong, Series by Marriott.

This multi-property agreement builds on the existing relationship between Marriott and FICO Corporation and will create a joint portfolio of 11 hotels across eight brands.

## New resort in East Bali

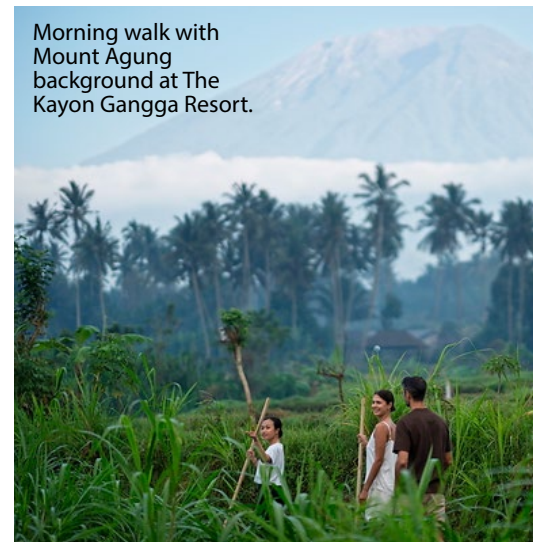
The Kayon Gangga Resort has opened in Ababi, Karangasem, East Bali.

Located near the renowned Tirta Gangga Water Palace, the resort includes Kepitu Restaurant, offering the flavors and traditions of Bali and Indonesia. Guests can also discover Wana Gangga, for a more casual atmosphere, while Fujin Teppanyaki Restaurant introduces an interactive Japanese dining experience to East Bali.

At Serayu Wellness guests can access treatments and experiences influenced by the restorative traditions of Bali.

The Kayon Hotels & Resorts is a family-owned collection of boutique properties across Bali. The group's

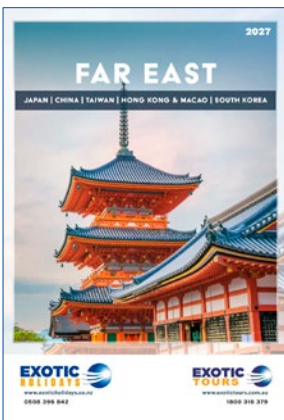
Morning walk with Mount Agung background at The Kayon Gangga Resort.



portfolio includes The Kayon Resort, The Kayon Jungle Resort and The Kayon Valley Resort in Ubud, and The Kayon Gangga Resort in Karangasem.

## Exotic's new Far East brochure

Exotic Holidays has launched its Far East 2027 brochure, covering Japan, China, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Macau, and South Korea. Featuring private tours, tailor-made journeys and immersive local experiences, the collection offers a range of ways to experience the region, from classic city breaks and popular highlights to multi-destination and more specialised journeys combining heritage, cuisine, nature, scenery, rail travel and local traditions. Itineraries are designed around the best time to travel. Brochures are available from **Brochure.net**. [rahul@exotic.net.nz](mailto:rahul@exotic.net.nz)



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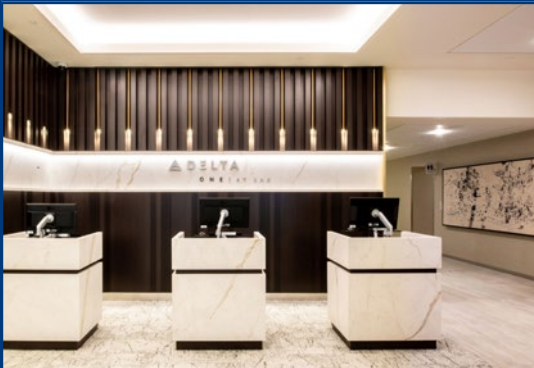
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## America's most awarded airline returns to Auckland for fourth season

Delta Air Lines' A350-900 returns to New Zealand skies with a daily AKL to LAX seasonal service from 26 October 2026 until March 2027, then flying thrice weekly to May 2027.

New Zealand travel advisors have a broad range of product options to match their clients' needs, including Delta One - the airline's most premium experience - Delta Premium Select, Delta Comfort and Delta Main.

They can do it with confidence, knowing they are selling America's most-awarded airline with accolades stretching back well over a decade. This year alone, Delta has been named in TIME's America's Best Companies of 2026 list and was the only airline in the top 100.

Delta's SkyMiles® received a five star rating from USA Today's Americas best Loyalty and Rewards Programs list recognising rewards programmes that provide the best customer experience across five key categories – ease of enrolment, ease of use, clarity of rewards, safety of personal data and reward value.

For the seventh year, DL earned a place on the Fortune 100 Best Companies to Work For® list, coming in at number nine, as well as securing the 11th spot on Fortune's list of World's Most Admired Companies. Glassdoor, Crystal Cabin, Rolling Stone, Cirium, Modern Luxury and The Points Guy are other respected organisations who have honoured Delta in 2026.

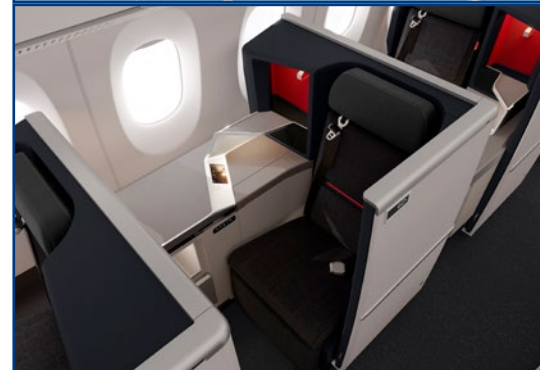
## Los Angeles and beyond

Travel advisors and their clients can be assured of a modernised airport experience at LAX. Delta's US\$2.3 billion Sky Way has transformed Terminals 2 and 3 into a connected, state-of-the-art campus designed to support the airline's long-term growth at the hub. Continued enhancements to wayfinding, security processing and terminal amenities make the experience even more convenient and efficient for customers.

LAX is the first airport in Delta's network to offer two Delta One Lounges and there is an additional Delta Sky Club set to open in 2027. Customers can enjoy the lounges on arrival if they have a connecting flight beyond LAX.

From LAX, USA and the world open up to Delta customers. The airline together with its partners offers more than 200 daily departures to nearly 70 destinations from LAX at peak. That scale, combined with Delta's premium offering, transformed airport experience, and deep roots in the Los Angeles community further strengthens its position as LAX's number one airline.

Alongside expanded South Pacific connectivity to Auckland, Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane, recent and upcoming growth includes new or returning services to Hong Kong, Chicago, Shanghai, Vancouver, Newark and Manila, plus Delta's largest yet schedule to Florida.



[VISIT THE DELTA PROFESSIONAL WEBSITE HERE](#)

## Cruising

### New suites for Crystal Serenity

Crystal Serenity will debut a new Crystal Owner's Suite and four Junior Penthouse Premium Suites following a 2028 dry dock.

The two-bedroom Crystal Owner's Suite will be midship and offer an expansive private retreat complemented by a spacious veranda. The living room will feature a library and fireplace, while the dining area will offer panoramic ocean views, a butler pantry and personalised bar service.

The master bedroom will have a king-size bed and two large walk-in closets. The master bathroom will be lined in marble and include a jacuzzi.

A second bedroom with a walk-in closet and separate bathroom is ideal for guests



Crystal Serenity

wanting to bring family members on the voyage.

The suite will include Technogym equipment with Technogym Coach programming and integrated entertainment, positioned to offer ocean views.

The new Junior Penthouse Premium Suites will complement the ship's six existing Junior Penthouse Deluxe Suites.

[crystalcruises.com](https://crystalcruises.com)

### Venues debut on Seven Seas Prestige

Regent Seven Seas Cruises has announced new and enhanced bars, lounges and beverage concepts debuting aboard Seven Seas Prestige in December 2026. These include Italian aperitivo and Mediterranean-inspired cocktails to zero-proof creations.

The new Galileo's Bar is designed as a pre-dinner destination. The venue offers



Azure will debut on Seven Seas Prestige

premium Italian spirits and distinctive cocktail presentations.

At Azure herbal cocktails, citrus-led spritzes and regional wines complement the restaurant's Mediterranean and Middle Eastern cuisine.

At Solmar Terrace at Compass Rose, guests will find a collection of wines, cocktails and zero-proof creations designed for open-air environment.

Beyond these new concepts, Seven Seas Prestige has an array of other bars and lounges such as Prestige Lounge, Meridian Lounge, the panoramic Observation Lounge and the art deco-inspired Connoisseur Lounge, al fresco Pool Bar and Coffee Connection.

[rssc.com/Ships/Seven Seas Prestige](https://rssc.com/Ships/Seven_Seas_Prestige)



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## Europe

## Scenic launches Iconic Switzerland itinerary

Scenic has launched a 13-day Iconic Switzerland journey.

This comes as the country's tourism boom reaches another high, with official figures showing 43.93 million hotel overnight stays in 2025, up 2.6% on the previous year. Demand from the Oceania region grew by 4.3%.

Catering for no more than 28 guests, the Scenic itinerary combines panoramic rail travel and popular mountain destinations with luxury accommodation, local culinary experiences and the support of a dedicated tour director.

Highlights include travelling on the GoldenPass Express; staying at Kempinski Palace Engelberg at the foothills of Mount Titlis; ascending to Jungfrauoch, known as the top of Europe and home to Europe's

## Self-drive and more in Scotland with WJ

World Journeys says a surge in enquiries for Scotland seems to be driven not just by the usual attractions – the landscapes, islands, whiskey, the castles and lakes, but also by the trend to get beyond the standard beaten-track to where there is more space, authenticity, and connection with locals.

The niche wholesaler says most enquiries have opted for self-drive



Highland cow at Isle of Skye



The Reuss River, Lucerne

highest railway station; discovering Swiss culinary traditions through a monastery cheesemaking class and a traditional fondue experience; two Scenic Enrich experiences: wine tasting in the vineyards surrounding Zurich and a risotto-making class on the shores of Lake Lugano, and taking in the Matterhorn and Grindelwald.

Clients who book by 31 October 2026 can save \$400 per person on 2027 itineraries. Early access for 2028 is open.

Switzerland itinerary [HERE](#).

itineraries, but with everything booked and organised for a seamless experience.

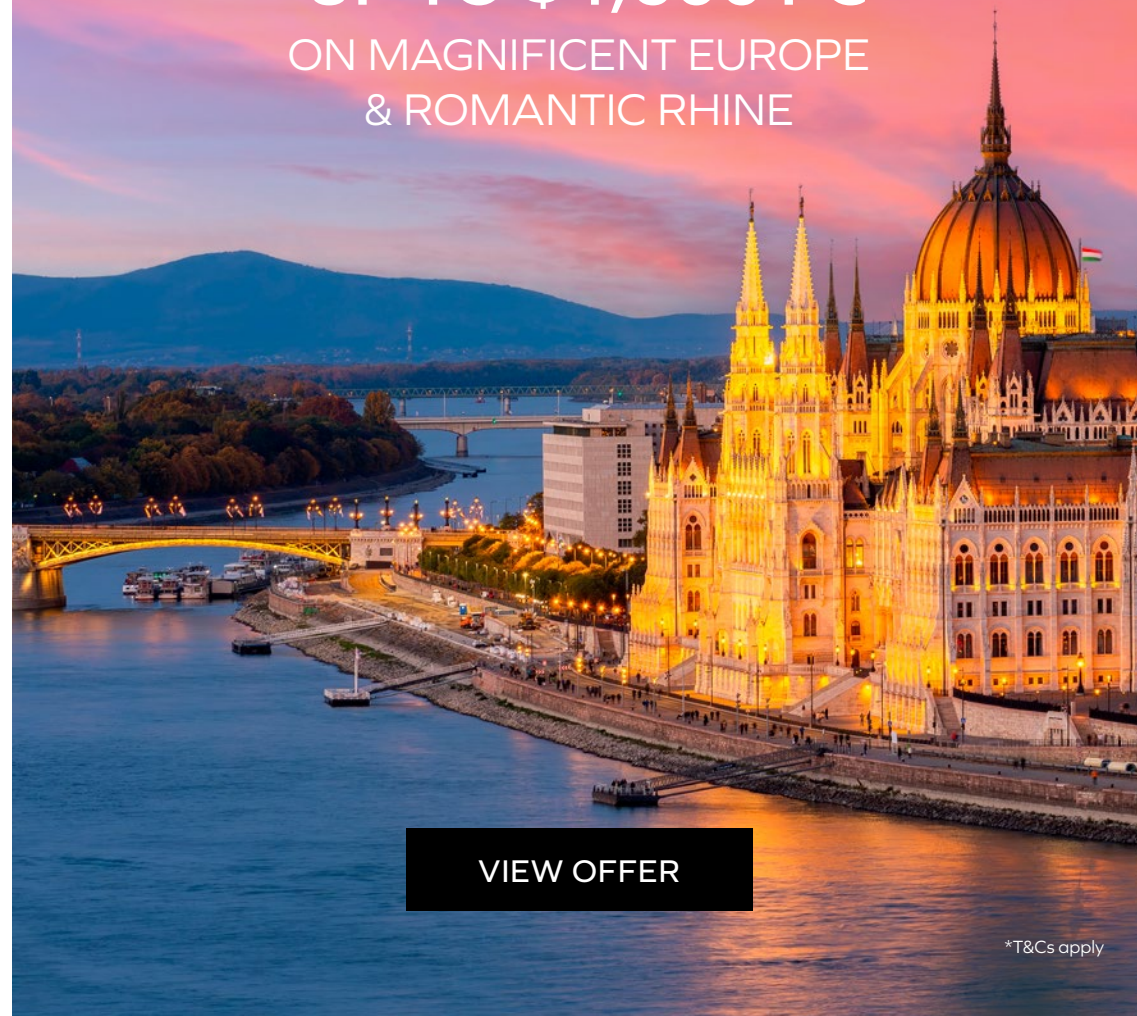
The nine-day Manor Houses of Scotland itinerary takes in Edinburgh, the Scottish Borders, Glasgow, Glencoe and Loch Ness, Inverness, the Cairngorms National Park and Edinburgh.

Priced from \$6,290 per person share twin, it includes eight-nights four-star accommodation with breakfast, car rental, collision damage waiver and local taxes, and select sightseeing experiences. Other options which can be added to a self-drive include a journey aboard the luxury Royal Scotsman, a Belmond train, a luxury barge cruise through Highlands, or a Wild Scotland cruise with Aurora Expeditions.

[worldjourneys.co.nz/?s=scotland](https://worldjourneys.co.nz/?s=scotland)

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## Australia

### GC resort to add adults-only precinct

Paradise Resort Gold Coast is creating the Oh Shun Blu adults-only pool and bar precinct.

Expected to open this Christmas, it will feature a heated 25-metre swimming pool with built-in spa jets, landscaped surrounds, poolside lounging and a swim-up bar, exclusively available to Paradise Resort guests aged 18 and over.

When general manager David Brook joined Paradise Resort 16 years ago, the property already had a Kids Club, activities and a focus on children, but it had not yet developed into the dedicated family resort guests know today.

‘The focus on children was there, but we knew we had to keep developing the kids’ experience and make family entertainment the heart of the resort,’ Brook says. ‘At the same time, in the back of my mind was the goal of creating a dedicated zone where adults could enjoy part of the holiday for themselves.’



Artists' impression of Oh Shun Blu

The new development will introduce 12 pool access rooms, giving guests staying in selected deluxe rooms direct access to the Oh Shun Blu pool and bar precinct. The second stage, which is set to open in early 2027, will complete the space with an indoor tapas and lounge bar.

The resort's facilities include two waterparks, a lagoon pool and spa, a Kids Club, a miniature train, a carousel, a games arcade, daily activities, live entertainment, and five dining outlets.

[paradiseresort.com.au/about](http://paradiseresort.com.au/about)

### Changes to experiencing Twelve Apostles

A \$126 million transformation of the Twelve Apostles Precinct will open on 16 October, creating a new gateway to the Great Ocean Road and changing the way visitors arrive at, experience and understand the landmark.

From 16 October, each visitor will need a booking to visit the Twelve Apostles. Bookings are made via the website and are currently free. Visitors without a booking will be able to make one at the entrance gate, although entry may not be immediate if parking has reached

capacity. Advance bookings are strongly recommended.

A fee for bookings will be introduced in April 2027, with all revenue directly reinvested into coastal protection, conservation and improvements to the visitor experience across the coast and parks of the Great Ocean Road.

The Keeray Woorroong Visitor Centre will operate 365 days a year, from 8am to 8pm during daylight saving and 9am to 5pm during standard time.

[twelveapostles.org.au/](http://twelveapostles.org.au/)



### Fly direct from Auckland to Adelaide with Qantas

Flying from 30 October 2026

AKL-ADL

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QF176

Schedule:  
Friday, Saturday,  
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Arrives: 6.55pm

ADL-AKL

Flight number:  
QF175

Schedule:  
Friday, Saturday,  
Sunday and Monday  
Departs: 8.45am  
Arrives: 3.30pm



Food and  
drinks



30kg  
baggage



Entertainment



Wi-Fi

Included when you fly  
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\*Schedule subject to change. Meals, beverages, inflight Wi-Fi availability and entertainment offerings vary between flights.

## New Zealand

### Campaign takes the (carrot) cake

Ohakune's giant carrot was sporting a new look on Monday, with an oversized Made Greater tag marking the launch of Visit Ruapehu's new long-term brand platform for the region.

The day began with a welcome at Maungārongo Marae for creative Bridget Taylor and the wider Visit Ruapehu whānau, before moving to Ohakune's Carrotland Adventure Park, where a group of locals joined the celebration and the Made Greater tag was revealed.

Visit Ruapehu general manager Jo Kennedy says the carrot was the perfect place to demonstrate what Made Greater is all about.

'You could say even a carrot is made greater in Ruapehu,' Kennedy adds.

The creative platform was developed by Bridget Taylor, one of New Zealand's most accomplished advertising and creative professionals.

She says the idea for Made Greater came from recognising not only how Ruapehu can elevate an experience, but how spending time in the region can change the way people feel.



Visit Ruapehu launches its new Made Greater brand platform at Ohakune's iconic giant carrot... Nigel Douglas, Visit Ruapehu board director and founder of The Counsel; Bridget Taylor, founder of Great Company; Jo Kennedy and Catherine Pakai-Dewes, Visit Ruapehu

It is a long-term destination brand platform that will roll out across Visit Ruapehu's digital, social media, radio and video channels, with plans to extend its reach into Australia through social media and collaborative in-market activity.

### New night combo in Rotorua

Tohu Experiences is introducing a hosted evening combining two of Rotorua's signature nighttime attractions – Te Puia's Marama Geyser Light Trail and Redwoods Treewalk Nightlights.

The evening begins with pick-up from selected Rotorua CBD accommodation and a guided walk through Te Puia's geothermal landscape, brought to life

with lights, projections, sound and storytelling.

Guests then head to the redwoods for an elevated canopy walk beneath illuminated lanterns. The experience takes approximately three hours, including return transport and is available year-round.

[hetohu.com](http://hetohu.com)

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## MYSTERY PERSON

Sponsored by Stuba



### A virtual mystery

Here's a photo we have left over from the recent First Travel Group frontliners' conference in Auckland. We know that's Cathy Jennings of YOU Travel Bethlehem getting a taste of virtual reality during the suppliers sessions but we can't quite make out who the mystery man on the right is.

If you can help us out, send his name and place of work to [stu@promag.co.nz](mailto:stu@promag.co.nz) and be in to win a \$30 prize from Stuba.

Congratulations to Chanika Prosser of Helloworld Travel Orewa, one of a multitude of readers who correctly identified Craig Martin of North Shore Business Travel as last week's mystery person. Stuba will be in touch.

## Pre-election insights, getting ready for bowls

With the 2026 NZ general elections just weeks away, Skål International Auckland's October luncheon featured ACT New Zealand's spokesperson for tourism and hospitality, Todd Stephenson MP as guest speaker.

Hosted at The Formery in Albert Street Auckland, Stephenson shared his perspective on the issues, opportunities and policy priorities affecting New Zealand's tourism and hospitality sectors. The discussion that followed allowed attendees to ask questions and gather

information the issues important to them.

(The October event was an industry networking event. Skål International Auckland is a non-political organisation, and hosting a guest speaker from one party did not constitute endorsement of any political party or policy.)

Skål Auckland also reports that spots at the Niue Island Bowls Day are now limited. However it is still possible to join industry colleagues for a day of friendly competition – either with a team or as an individual. Register [HERE](#).



Michelle Geale, CPG Hotels, Jonas George, Exotic Holidays; Niki McKinnon Dowe, Hallmark Chauffeur Drive



Gaye Wood, Regency Tourism (centre) with Todd Stephenson, ACT NZ and Prasheel Churi, Sebel Auckland Manukau/Auckland Club president



Paul Dymond, Wendy Wu Tours receives the October raffle prize from Todd Stephenson, ACT NZ Party and Prasheel Churi, Skål Auckland president



Benedikt Bouillon, Habit Consulting; Paul Dymond, Wendy Wu Tours; Jonas George and Rahul Sharma, Exotic Holidays

## Viking awarded

Viking has again been voted number one for river and Ocean by Condé Nast Traveler in the publication's 2026 Readers' Choice Awards. This marks the sixth consecutive year Viking has been rated at the top of both the river and ocean categories.

**TRAVELinc**  
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### TODAY'S PEARLER

"Art, like morality, consists in drawing the line somewhere."

– Gilbert K Chesterton

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