

AUSTRALIA

NEWS IN BRIEF



The Ritz-Carlton, Melbourne set to take centre stage within the city's skyline following grand opening in early 2023

Occupying prime retail space amidst the city's sprawling skyline, The Ritz-Carlton, Melbourne is set to become Australia's tallest hotel when doors open in early 2023. Located at the very heart of Victoria's coastal capital, the stunning glass-fronted hotel will provide sweeping views across Melbourne's buzzing urban hub, the Yarra River, and Port Phillip Bay.

Guests will be able to enjoy panoramic scenes from each of the hotel's 257 stylish guest rooms and suites, decked out in custom leather and velvet furniture, hand-made glass panels, bespoke light fixtures, and featuring marble bathrooms. The wider premises will further boast a signature restaurant, intimate library bar, wellness spa, and more than 9,100 square feet of event and meeting space.



Seeking to establish itself as a prime wedding destination, the Ritz-Carlton will additionally provide a range of customisable wedding packages, alongside the highest level of personalised service and facilities. Dedicated reception spaces are enlivened with bold geometries, art and

distinctive finishes – including the 600-seat Grand Ballroom. This most memorable space comprises glass chandeliers, a floor-to-ceiling feature window (inspired by the Great Hall of the National Gallery of Victoria), as well as an adjoining terrace balcony overlooking landscaped gardens below.



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Qantas expands Sydney gateway with new direct flights to India and South Korea

Australia's flag carrier, Qantas, will be growing its international network out of Sydney, with new direct routes to the capital of India's southern Karnataka state, Bengaluru, and the capital of South Korea, Seoul, beginning in September and December, respectively.

Operating four times weekly, the Sydney-Bengaluru route will be the first non-stop service between the two nations, cutting almost three hours off the current fastest travel time between the pair. Along with Jetstar, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Qantas, the airline will also operate three weekly flights to Seoul, offering business, premium leisure, and low-cost travel options between the two countries for the first time since 2008.

In addition to the new routes, Qantas is set to enter into a codeshare agreement with IndiGo, India's largest domestic carrier, enabling connectivity beyond Bengaluru to more than 50 Indian cities. The deal will essentially allow passengers to seamlessly transit between destinations.

Perth debuts new 400-metre-long zipline along iconic Matagarup Bridge

A striking landmark on Perth's Swan River, the undulating Matagarup Bridge has seen its status as a must-see tourist attraction heightened with the addition of a thrilling 400-metre-long zipline. Blasting adrenaline junkies across the water at 75 km/h before landing on the Burswood Park foreshore, this exciting feature can be enjoyed either during the day when the sun is high in the sky, or at twilight, when stunning shades of orange and red reflect off the shimmering waters just below.

To reach the 35-metre-high launch pad, participants are required to climb 150 steps up the western arch at a 45-degree angle. For optimum safety, these climbs are guided, and individuals are further provided with a full-body harness, helmet and bridge latch with tether.

The zipline experience can also be combined with a climb of the entire bridge. This package deal requires participants to climb, shimmy and slide past the bridge beams to reach the SkyView platform before ziplining back to base.



Freycinet National Park launches experimental five-and-a-half-hour hike

Situated on Tasmania's East Coast, the stunning Freycinet National Park has seen its activity offering expand with a brand new, experimental five-and-a-half-hour hike.

Departing from Freycinet Lodge, the guided tour starts with a climb to the Wineglass Bay Lookout – where panoramic views of the region's iconic curved bay are sure to astound.



After a closer inspection of the bay's crystal-clear waters and pure white sand beach, participants will strike a route west along the Isthmus Track to captivating Hazards Beach – where a gourmet picnic lunch awaits.

During the entirety of the trek, a passionate and knowledgeable guide will detail the history of Freycinet National Park's glorious shores and pink granite peaks, all while pointing out local flora and fauna. After exploring the picture-perfect sands at Hazards Beach, hikers can rest their feet onboard the Freycinet Aqua Taxi, which takes groups back to base while providing views of the peninsula from a different perspective.