

Oasis-class ships are coming this way

THE arrival of ever-larger cruise ships into Australasian waters is inevitable, with Royal Caribbean well advanced in planning for deployment of its Oasis-class vessels in Australia and NZ.

According to RCCL's Associate Vice President of Marine & Safety, Captain Nik Antalis (**pictured left**), "it's only a matter of time," as he urged delegates at the Australian Cruise Association conference to take action to prepare for the arrival of the mega-vessels.

Oasis-class vessels are currently the largest cruise ships in operation, 360m in length with 5,400 lower berths.

But a number of other cruise lines, including MSC and Dream Cruises, also have their own behemoths of the sea coming.

Antalis noted that the only Australian port which will be able to handle the large vessels is the new Brisbane International Cruise Terminal (**see page 3**), in contrast to a host of ports in New Zealand which were already heeding calls from the cruise sector to improve their infrastructure.

Antalis also contrasted the Australian paucity of Oasis-capable ports with the attitude in Asia, where there will next year be a total of 40 destinations



able to handle the world's largest cruise ships - an increase of 35 in just the last five years.

He said ports that would be suitable in Australasia with relatively little investment would include Hobart, Darwin and Fremantle, but Sydney and Auckland remain problematic.

MEANWHILE Silversea Cruises MD Adam Armstrong (**pictured right**) also highlighted the key opportunity afforded by the huge expansion of the global cruise fleet over the next decade.

Armstrong said if Australia and New Zealand wish to continue to capitalise on the global boom in cruising - and the associated economic and employment benefits - it is vital that capacity be available for bigger ships.

Currently there are 138 confirmed new ships on order for delivery by 2027, comprising a whopping 285,000 total beds.

And while expedition cruising is booming, the relatively small



size of ships in the burgeoning expedition fleet means it's the "next big little thing," he added.

"It's very exciting, it's very sexy but they're only 3% of the capacity that's coming online.

"The vast majority of the new ships are big, large, contemporary premium ships and that's got to be the focus of growth for the Australasian market, to attract those ships," Armstrong said.

He also highlighted the expense of operating in local waters.

"I want to make it clear that the industry will pay its way, we're not trying to avoid costs and we're certainly not trying to avoid paying for upgrades to ports in particular," he said.

But "high costs drive cruise prices up and ultimately if they get too high they drive ships out," Armstrong added, giving the example of a host of new taxes and charges imposed on the industry in New Zealand in just the last two years.

One Ocean out

ONE Ocean Expeditions has released its 2021 schedules, with the *RCGS Resolute* cruising to South America, the British Isles, Iceland, Spitsbergen, the Arctic & more - oneoceanexpeditions.com.



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On location in
Geelong

Today's issue of CW is coming to you courtesy of the Australian Cruise Association (ACA) which is hosting its annual conference in Geelong.

THE ACA Conference wraps up today after a packed program looking at the huge prospects for the Australian and New Zealand cruise sector.

Infrastructure issues in Auckland and Sydney have been a key focus, as well as the ongoing development of the shoreside experience on both sides of the Tasman.

Pics from the event are now at facebook.com/cruiseweekly and next year's conference will take place in Townsville, Qld.

Cruise sector aids Dorian victims



THERE'S been an outpouring of generosity from the world's cruise lines in the last couple of days, which have collectively pledged millions of dollars to help communities impacted by Hurricane Dorian in the Bahamas.

Aid includes \$2 million from the Carnival Foundation, along with \$1m from each of Norwegian Cruise Line Holdings, Disney Cruise Line and Royal Caribbean, with the money to fund disaster relief and cruise lines also offering

to transport goods on their ships to assist victims.

The Category 5 storm, now downgraded, has killed at least 20 people and destroyed 13,000 homes in the Bahamas, while cruise lines have also been forced to rearrange some of their itineraries to avoid Dorian.

Some passengers have had longer cruises than expected, while other voyages have been shortened due to port closures on the Florida coast.

NCL Europe comp

NORWEGIAN Cruise Line (NCL) is offering Australian and NZ agents the chance to win weekly prizes when they answer questions about the line's European sailings.

Prizes on offer include Lindt chocolate, wine, a \$100 Prezzy gift card, and a \$300 Visa gift card as the major prize up for grabs.

To go into the draw to win agents need to head **HERE** and answer two questions.

The comp runs until 23 Sep.

Student education

ONE Ocean Expeditions has formed a partnership with Connected North and Ocean Wise to rollout new video tech to help better educate students around the world about the remote regions the cruise line sails to.



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Friday 6th September 2019

Station Pier set for common use facility

MELBOURNE'S Station Pier is looking closely at expanding its capacity to handle large numbers of cruise passengers, with the existing TT-Line ferry terminal potentially set to open up for use by other cruise lines.

Speaking at the Australian Cruise Association Conference in Geelong yesterday, Victorian Ports Corporation CEO Rachel Johnson said she had just been given the go-ahead by the Victorian Govt to negotiate with the operators ferry between Melbourne and Tasmania.

Potential upgrades on the pier would also include a people mover to make it easier for passengers to get to the dock.

Johnson said the organisation was looking closely at hosting Ovation-class ships, highlighting Station Pier's proximity to the Melbourne CBD as a key feature.

NZ growth slows

THE New Zealand tourism sector is facing a period of stagnation, according to NZ Cruise Association Chair Debbie Summers.

Current predictions forecast a growth rate of 0%, she told delegates at the Australian Cruise Association conference in Geelong yesterday.

"This is because we're riding on these really powerful international waves; it is unwelcome but it is the world we live in, and provides the opportunity for consolidation".

Summers said this was actually good news for cruise, with authorities showing "more engagement and interest in our sector".

She noted that if cruise were an inbound holiday market in NZ it would come in second place after Australian visitors, and ahead of those from China.

Brisbane ahead of schedule



CONSTRUCTION work on Brisbane's new International Cruise Terminal is proceeding apace, with almost all of its 107 wharf piles installed and major civil works including concrete pours and the base of the new terminal building in progress.

Within the next two to three months the developers expect the roof to be on the new terminal, while car park and road works are also under way.

Port of Brisbane GM Strategy and Innovation, Cameron Hall, showcased the project at the Australian Cruise Association conference in Geelong yesterday, saying the project is expected to be completed significantly ahead of the 03 Oct 2020 arrival of its first vessel.

"We're going to be ready for

practical completion by the end of the financial year," he promised, with the debut of commercial operations to be preceded by an extensive "FITT" program - meaning "Facility Induction Testing and Training".

"We want to make sure that when the first vessel does arrive it's the perfect passenger experience," Hall said.

"We will be handling 450,000-500,000 passengers per year, so we are really doubling down on our efforts to make sure the Brisbane International Cruise Terminal delivers on what is required by this vibrant and exciting sector of our economy."

He confirmed the terminal already had 190 bookings for the 2020/21 season, with capacity also in place for Oasis-class ships.

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Queen on silver screen



GUESTS aboard the *Queen Mary 2* were recently given the opportunity to appear as extras in Steven Soderbergh's new feature film *Let them all talk* (working title).

Scenes were filmed aboard the luxury vessel over a seven-day east bound voyage from New York to Southampton (**pictured**), with the movie starring

Hollywood heavyweights such as Meryl Streep, Candice Bergen, Gemma Chan, Lucas Hedges and Dianne Wiest.

Cunard President Simon Paethorpe said "We were delighted to host Steven Soderbergh, Meryl Streep and a star-studded cast on our flagship for what will be an incredible movie".

Sharing Success at C360



QUESTIONING the value of social media for cruise advertising, and multi-generational cruising dominated discussions at Cruise360's Sharing Success panel.

Bicton Travel's Carole Smethurst spoke of her group's use of social media more as a branding than selling tool, with panel host Phil Hoffmann from Phil Hoffmann Travel adding the importance of social media in creating destination awareness.

One of the highlights of Cruise Line International Association (CLIA) Australasia's annual event, the panel was partaken by five travel agent cruise experts: Robyn Sinfield from Home Travel

Company; Kathy Pavlidis from Travel Associates Kew; Jeff Leckey from HOOT Cruises/House of Travel; Carole Smethurst; Neil Kirby from Travel Masters and panel host Phil Hoffmann.

Also discussed on the panel was the importance of multi-generational cruising, with Kathy Pavlidis adding "once they go on a cruise and have a great time, you've got them for life", and Sinfield enthusing the importance of getting both grandparents and grandchildren on board together.

Pictured on the panel at Cruise360 is, Phil Hoffmann; Robyn Sinfield; Kathy Pavlidis; Jeff Leckey; Carole Smethurst and Neil Kirby.



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Friday 6th September 2019

CMV deposit deal

CRUISE & Maritime Voyages (CMV) has launched a major push to encourage early bookings on longer cruises, with 50% reductions in deposits for selected "grand voyages" and world cruises of 45 nights-plus.

Eligible itineraries include the 2020 Southbound Voyage of *Vasco da Gama* en route to Australia, and the 2021 return plus selected sectors.

Columbus world cruise sectors are also available for booking with the half-price deposit deal, along with *Marco Polo's* Grand Oriental Odyssey in 2021 and the Grand South American and Amazon cruise to be operated by CMV's *Magellan*.

The offer is applicable to new bookings only in all cabin categories, and is combinable with current promotions including Buy One Get One Free, Columbus Club Discounts and more - call 1300 307 934.

Cruise Russia tours

CRUISE Russia has launched its most comprehensive brochure to date, doubling the number of First class cruises and increasing the number of departures on select tours.

New for 2020 is the 12-day 'Impressions of Russia' cruise tour priced from only \$4,530 per person twin share, with the majority of cabins featuring private balconies.

General Manager of Sales & Marketing for Cruise Russia, Bryce Crampton said "whilst Europe is well catered for by the large brands, this is not the case with Russia but with the increase in locally operated Russian river cruises we saw an opportunity to provide agents with a selection of quality cruises at great prices to offer clients".

More information online at www.cruise-russia.com.au.

Preview in perfect Harmony



TO MARK the inaugural sailing of its specialist Mekong River ship *Emerald Harmony* late last week, Evergreen Cruises & Tours has formally released its first look inside the new river vessel.

The newly unveiled images include *Harmony's* stylish interiors such as its spacious suites (Grand Balcony suite pictured top), signature sun and pool decks, the Horizon Bar & Lounge, as well as the Lotus Lounge and Reflections Restaurant.

Harmony is also the first Star-Ship to remove the use of all single-use plastics on board, with all guests provided with complementary metal water bottle to refill from water stations



& glass water bottles in cabins.

Itineraries offered on the new ship include an eight-day Majestic Mekong River Cruise sailing from Cambodia's capital Phnom Penh, to Vietnam's Ho Chi Minh.

Also on offer is the eight-day Treasures & Temples of Vietnam & Cambodia cruise, voyaging Vietnam's Ha Long Bay and Cambodia's popular tourist city of Siem Reap.

Pictured inset is *Harmony's* Reflections restaurant.

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Styling up for cup

P&O Cruises is marking 50 years of cruises to The Melbourne Cup by inviting Australian model Fiona Falkner to headline its Fashion at Sea event this year.

The trendy six-night cruise will depart Sydney on 31 Oct on board the *Pacific Explorer*, with the catwalk show to be produced by noted Aussie fashion stylist Fernando Barraza and choreographer to the stars Ame Delves.

Food the key to luring Gen Z



THE best way to get to the heart of Gen Z cruisers is through their stomachs, the audience heard at CLIA Australasia's Cruise360 conference last week.

Speaking on the topic of selling cruising to the Gen Z, Uniworld Boutique River Cruises' President & CEO Ellen Bettridge said a recent Contiki study showed 95% of Gen Zs research what they plan to eat while on a trip, while 35% admitted they "prioritised food" as a determining factor when choosing a holiday.

Cruise lines and agents might want to also start thinking about vegetarian and vegan options when selling cruises to Gen Z, Bettridge cautioned, citing data that showed 80% planned to go "meatless" at least once a week while on holiday.

"These young people are not just becoming vegetarians for health reasons, they are also doing it because of the global environmental impact," she said.

Gen Zs are incentivised by

cruises that embody a strong environmental ethos, with the need to "give back" a strong priority, Bettridge said.

Precipitating giggles from the audience was a list of Gen Z lingo that agents can use to help communicate more effectively during the sales cycle.

Bettridge suggested being aware of terms like "lit" (exciting) or "shook" (very impressed) because they can prove useful when selling cruise product to Gen Z.

Generation Z is typically defined as the generation of people born in the late 1990s and early 2000s.

Pictured: Ellen Bettridge delivering her Gen Z talk at C360.

Aranui 6 detailed

ARANUI Cruises has confirmed an order for a new *Aranui 6* cruise ship with capacity for 280 passengers.

To be dedicated to a "true luxury cruise experience," the ship will operate alongside *Aranui 5* as she continues with cargo/cruise combo voyages.

NZ backs dolphins

THE New Zealand Government has mandated that cruise operators limit the time passengers spend swimming with dolphins in the popular Bay of Islands region.

Under the new regulations, passengers may spend a maximum of 20 minutes at a time with dolphins, and ships are now restricted to visiting in either the morning or afternoon to give marine mammals time away from human interaction.

A 2016 Massey University report found the Bay of Islands' bottlenose dolphins were "being loved into extinction" by tourists.

Evergreen new brox

EVERGREEN Tours & Cruises' recently released 20/21 South America cruising and touring brochure showcases the history, culture, nature and cuisine from mainland South America, the Amazon, the Galapagos Islands and the Chilean Fjords.

The 16-day South American Highlights itinerary is new for 2020 and explores Buenos Aires, Rio de Janeiro, Iguazú Falls and more.

A highlight of the brox is the 33-Day South America & Cruising the Cape program which comprises a 14-night cruise from Buenos Aires to Santiago taking in Cape Horn and the southern tip of South America.

For more information on the brochure, **CLICK HERE**.



NEW Zealand Cruise Association Chairman Debbie Summers gave a full and frank assessment of the frustrations over the installation of a mooring dolphin in Auckland Harbour, with the relatively minor infrastructure project repeatedly challenged by local activists.

"I actually think democracy is a bit overrated," she told Australian Cruise Association delegates in Geelong yesterday.

Summers showed a picture of passengers being tendered off *Ovation of the Seas* (**below**) which she captioned "polishing a turd".

