



Flight Centre cites cruising demand

ABOUT one in five Flight Centre clients is hoping to take a cruise once there is a relaxation of COVID-19 restrictions, according to a customer sentiment survey released by the company during its annual general meeting yesterday.

Managing Director Graham Turner told investors the recent poll of Flight Centre's Australian leisure customers confirmed the significant pent-up demand for travel across the globe.

The answers to the question "once restrictions are lifted, which travel type are you considering booking in the next 12 months" indicated that 58% of customers hope to travel internationally and 52% want to take an interstate trip.

Just over 8% said they were considering booking a domestic cruise, while 9.4% of respondents said they wanted to take an



international voyage.

Only 3.6% of Flight Centre's clientele said they were not planning to travel in the first 12 months after restrictions ease.

Responding to questions during the annual general meeting, Turner confirmed Flight Centre's 2022/23 cruise booking levels had returned to normal levels.

He also said Flight Centre was meeting with governments on

both sides of the Tasman to get the current ban on cruising lifted.

"There is general agreement from health authorities on what is safe domestically; cruise lines such as a 6,000-berth MSC ship have been operating in the Mediterranean over the past couple of months with no major COVID-19 issues," Turner said.

"Cruising is safe now if they stick to the protocols," he added.

MSC adds testing

MSC Cruises has announced enhanced measures for its current Italy sailings on *MSC Grandiosa*, adding a mid-voyage coronavirus test for all pax in addition to existing pre-embarkation testing.

More frequent testing of crews will also be undertaken, along with additional onboard sanitation and tightening of the definition of "close contact" for tracing purposes, from 15 minutes down to 10.

The company has also suspended *MSC Magnifica* sailings until 18 Dec due to new travel restrictions in key source markets including France and Germany.

Cruise Weekly today

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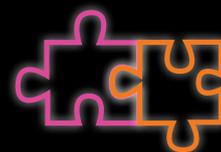
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THIS year's funniest wildlife photo has been revealed (**pictured**), and we must say, given the year it's been, it is quite a fitting choice.

The photo of Terry the grumpy turtle giving the finger was named the funniest of the year in the recent Comedy Wildlife Photography Awards.

The winning photographer was Australian Mark Fitzpatric, with his snap selected from over 7,000 entries.

The photo, taken off the coast of Lady Elliot Island, initially found viral fame online, and is likely a general feeling from the animals of the Great Barrier Reef towards humanity.



Island Escape is back



NEW Zealand's Island Escape Cruises has released details of its new yacht, *Island Escape* (**pictured**), and has also launched a number of its new itineraries for the 2021-22 season.

Earlybird discounts are currently available, with the season starting in Nov 2021 with three heli-golf cruises departing from Auckland.

For Dec, Island Escape Cruises is offering six-night voyages from Auckland to the Bay of Islands, and from Jan 2022, voyages to Fiordland where it will for the

first time explore Northern and Southern Fiordland as part of two different voyages.

More itineraries for the 2021 inaugural season will be released soon, ahead of the delivery of *Island Escape* in Apr 2021.

The 32-passenger yacht was designed by Vard in Norway, and is under construction at its Asian shipyard.

All 17 suites come with ocean views, with accommodations including an Owners suite, and six Horizon suites, all of which have private balconies.

Also available are Ocean Suites, arranged in king, twin or single configurations.

Island Escape will also feature a fully certified helideck, two luxury tenders and two Zodiacs, in addition to fishing gear and water toys.

Enhanced protocols and procedures in line with New Zealand requirements will be observed, as will guidelines from the World Health Organization.

For more, **CLICK HERE**.

UNWTO backs cruise

THE World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) and the International Maritime Organization (IMO) have issued a joint call supporting the safe resumption of cruise ship operations.

The joint statement invites governments around the world to facilitate their own cruise sector's recovery under safe conditions using both the European Union's guidance on the gradual and safe resumption of operations of cruise ships, and the three framework documents (operator, passenger and seafarer) developed by the United Kingdom's Chamber of Shipping, together with Cruise Lines International Association.

Highlighting the importance of the cruise sector for the world economy, the IMO and UNWTO have also recognised the efforts made by the industry, different countries and international organisations to protect the safety, health and well-being of passengers and crews, as well as the health of the population of cruise destinations.

The pair also emphasised that the resumption of cruise ship operations will also benefit the wider maritime community, as they are often requested by Rescue Coordination Centres to offer assistance to ships in distress.

According to data cited by the World Tourism Organization, the cruise sector supports 1.2 million jobs and contributes US\$150 billion to the global economy every year.

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