



A third CCL ship?

THE success of Carnival Cruise Line's (CCL) Queensland homeport endeavour may serve as a proving ground for whether Australia can handle another of the line's ships, Director of Marketing & PR Kara Glamore has told **CW**.

She said it was an enormous coup to be backed by head office with *Carnival Spirit* homeporting in Brisbane.

"We need to prove ourselves with that, because it's a whole new clientele, we're new to that market," Glamore said.

"I think we've just got to get that rolling, and I can't wait because Brisbane seems like such a ripe market for us..it's the correct tone of brand, it seems like a really good fit."

Outgoing VP & GM Jennifer Vandekreeke agreed, characterising Qld as "everything Carnival is about".

Cruise360 is off again

THE ongoing coronavirus outbreak in Sydney will prevent Cruise Lines International Association's (CLIA) Cruise360 Australasia conference from going ahead next month.

Instead, CLIA will bring industry leaders together online on 27 Aug, with C360 postponed until "a more suitable time", according to Managing Director Australasia Joel Katz.

Key issues and important updates will still be shared with CLIA's travel advisor community, the Association said.

"Current uncertainty around restrictions in Sydney is likely to continue and will prevent our industry from convening in person," Katz said.

"Despite the difficult circumstances, we are still focused on the critical issues affecting our industry and will

bring our wider cruise community together in an online forum."

Further details will be announced soon, with ticketholders to be contacted directly and offered an automatic transfer to the future event or a refund.

A CLIA spokesperson said the Cruise Champion award, which was meant to honour a travel advisor at this year's C360 (**CW** 05 Jul), will still be judged, but timing would be reconsidered, with further details to be announced later.

This year is the second in a row C360 has been cancelled.

CLIA is currently urging everyone involved in cruising to meet personally with their local Member of Parliament to highlight the "enormous human cost" of the current cruise ban (**CW** 12 Jul).

Cruise Weekly today

Cruise Weekly today features three pages of all the latest cruise industry news.

New Coral 2022

CORAL Expeditions has released new journeys for next year visiting Australia's west and south coast.

The cruise line's *Coral Adventurer* and *Coral Geographer* will play host to the eight new expeditions, with highlights along Western Australia's coast, including a visit to the Houtman Abrolhos, the Montebello Islands and Shark Bay.

Along the southern coast, visitors will enjoy the Bunda cliffs of the Great Australian Bight, sip sunset drinks at Lucky Bay, and learn to shuck oysters in Coffin Bay.

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RESERVATIONS OPEN TOMORROW – VIEW BROCHURE

Did you know?

Travel & Cruise Weekly's fortnightly consumer magazine called *Keep Dreaming* is specially designed for agents to send their clients.



Getting a-Jed-dah

MSC Cruises has expanded its Saudi Arabia program by 21 cruises during this year's northern summer.

The line's *MSC Bellissima* will homeport in Jeddah, sailing three- and four-night cruises to Egypt and Jordan, complementing the cruise line's previously announced winter 2021/22 Red Sea itineraries (*CW* 03 May).

Bellissima will be the eighth MSC ship to restart passenger operations, with a further three preparing to start future voyages by the end of the northern summer - at which point half of MSC's fleet will be back at sea.

She will be the largest cruise ship ever to sail the waters of the Red Sea, having arrived in Jeddah on the weekend to prepare for her maiden season.

"As the tourism industry of Saudi Arabia grows progressively for its own residents and international visitors, we at MSC Cruises are looking forward to making a positive and lasting contribution as more people explore and discover the rich heritage and incredible cultural attractions it has to offer," said MSC Cruises Executive Chairman Pierfrancesco Vago.

"With our cruises this summer from Jeddah of *MSC Bellissima* and a ship dedicated for the winter season in the Red Sea we are committed to serve holidaymakers with the very best cruise experiences."

Qld gives cruise the boot

AS THE cruise sector reels in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic, Clean Cruising General Manager Dan Russell (**pictured**) has lambasted Queensland Health for refusing to meet the industry with a resumption pathway for domestic cruising.

With local travel companies continuing to fight for survival, Russell said the lack of action was in stark contrast to the speed applied to enable the National Rugby League's relocation to Queensland in order to keep its season going.

"Businesses like mine that are treading water could be forgiven for thinking that while rugby league gets a free pass, the cruise connected sector cops the boot," Russell said.

"Cruising has been put in the too hard basket for long enough and the department can no longer refuse to meet with the industry.

"After 16 months, it is already well overdue."

Russell said industry sources had privately disclosed to him more than 700 cruise specialist travel agencies in Australia have closed their doors, nearly 200 are inactive, and around one in four have walked away.

Nearly 5,600 cruise specialist travel consultants — more than half of those working in the pre-pandemic industry — are now gone, Russell said.

"If the department can make time to review plans to accommodate [NRL] up here, how can it not even make the time to review plans to restart one of the state's key sectors?"



Russell cited a statement by Queensland Tourism Minister Stirling Hinchcliffe, who said any proposal to reintroduce cruise ships to the state would need to start with a COVID-safe plan approved by the state's Chief Health Officer.

"He would be aware that such plans already exist, and have allowed many overseas countries to resume operations as far back as Jul 2020," Russell noted.

The General Manager of the family-owned business said the new \$200 million Brisbane International Cruise Terminal would "continue to gather dust and more job losses will occur until the state considers the COVID-safe plans that have been sitting in the drawer for months".

"The Sunshine State should lead the nation's cruise restart with its new terminal, gorgeous coastal destinations and excellent record with COVID," he added.

Russell contrasted Queensland's reticence with the abandon of Warren Entsch, federal Member for Leichhardt, who is now actively seeking support for a pathway to the resumption of cruising (*CW* yesterday).

NCLH sues Florida

NORWEGIAN Cruise Line Holdings (NCLH) has upped the ante over Florida's controversial ban on vaccine passports (*CW* 31 May), launching a lawsuit against the state's Surgeon General.

The court action accuses the state of preventing NCLH from "safely and soundly resuming trips," because of a law introduced in May, which imposes fines of US\$5,000 per violation on businesses which force customers to provide proof of vaccination.

NCLH said after extensive planning and preparation it was ready to resume sailing from Florida's ports on 15 Aug.

"Unfortunately despite our best efforts we have been unable to reach a reasonable and mutually agreeable solution with the State of Florida that would allow us to require documentation confirming guests' vaccination status prior to boarding.

"Despite the ongoing global pandemic and the accelerating spread of the Delta variant, Florida continues to prohibit us from requiring vaccine documentation which we believe would enable us to resume sailing in the safest way possible," it added.

NCLH said it had "reluctantly turned to the courts for relief," saying it believes Florida's approach is on the "wrong side of federal law, public health, science and is not in the best interest of the welfare of our guests, crew and the communities we visit".



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PORTHOLE

WE'D rather do this journey on a cruise ship, but each to their own...

Maltese swimmer Neil Agius (pictured) has broken the longest non-stop ocean swim record.

Agius swam 125.6 kilometres without a wetsuit from Linosa, one of the Pelagie Islands in the Sicily Channel, back to Malta in just over 52 hours.

The long-distance freestyle specialist swam through a pair of sunrises and sunsets, having initially intended to swim 153km from Tunisia to Malta - hopes which were dashed when his crew was unable to leave Africa because of bad weather.

More than 30 privateers watched over Agius during the swim, but over two million watched online via a live stream, according to Maltese sources.

Agius used the publicity from the swim to highlight plastic pollution in our oceans.

Australians may have been watching on with mixed emotions, with our own Chloe McCordle's previous world record set in 2014 now gazumped by barely a kilometre.

Oh, by the way, Agius' girlfriend proposed to him prior to the attempt - and he said yes.



It's all action at AIDA



CARNIVAL Corporation brand AIDA Cruises' *AIDAcosma* (pictured) has been presented to the world for the first time, leaving the construction hall of the Meyer Werft shipyard in Papenburg.

All major technical installations on board are finished, and like her sister *AIDAnova*, *AIDAcosma* will be operated with low-emission liquefied natural gas.

Before *AIDAcosma* enters service in Dec, all interior areas will be completed at the outfitting pier, test cruises will be carried out, and the final outfitting will take place.

The Godmother of *AIDAcosma* will be German former track cyclist Kristina Vogel, while Captain Vincent Cofalka will accompany the christening and commissioning.

The transfer to AIDA via the Ems from Hamburg to Gran Canaria will begin on 22 Dec, following which *AIDAcosma* will sail seven-day cruises around the Canary

Islands in her premiere season in the northern winter 2021/2022 (**CW** 21 May).

MEANWHILE, AIDA expanded its northern summer program on the weekend from Kiel and Mallorca.

Due to the high demand for voyages from ports in Northern Germany, AIDA will deploy a yet-to-be-announced Sphinx-class ship from Kiel.

Bookable now, the first four-day short cruise to Gdynia will start on 15 Aug, followed by a three-day cruise to Gothenburg, with the voyages being offered alternately through 14 Oct.

Kiel will then be the launch point of seven-day Baltic Sea round trips to Gothenburg, Visby, and Stockholm aboard *AIDAprima* every Sat until 23 Oct.

AIDA will also offer two different seven-day round trips aboard *AIDAprima's* sister *AIDAprila* from Mallorca until 30 Oct.

The two sailings can also be combined into a 14-day voyage.

CLIA UPDATE



with Joel Katz
 MD, CLIA Australasia

Meet Your MP

THIS week we've seen a welcome change in the political conversation as Australian MPs like Warren Entsch speak up in support of a cruise revival.

It's a promising sign, and one that follows many months of persistent efforts by CLIA and cruise lines to gain recognition for the thousands of Australians who rely on cruising.

Together with the support we've received from travel agents and others who joined our Ready, Set, Sail campaign, these efforts are reinforcing the message that cruising is worth more than \$5 billion a year to Australia and that agreement on cruising's resumption is urgently needed.

There's still work to be done, so as our own lobbying efforts continue CLIA has announced the next phase of Ready, Set, Sail, which aims to bring politicians together with the people most affected by cruising's suspension.

We're urging travel agents, industry suppliers and other stakeholders to hold their own meetings with MPs, to show them how the current crisis is impacting real Australians.

To help, we've created an online toolkit with instructions on how to seek a meeting with your MP, tell your personal story and argue the key messages.

CLICK HERE to get involved, and help us build the momentum.

