

Australian cruise numbers flatline

AFTER more than a decade of record annual growth, the expansion of the Australian cruise sector effectively ground to a halt in 2018 as the capacity crisis in Sydney Harbour made its impact felt right across the industry.

The annual Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA) cruise figures, released at NSW Parliament House yesterday, showed cruising in local waters grew just 0.1% during the year, and CLIA is expecting the same outcome or even a slight decline in the 2019 results.

When international cruising was added in the overall result was a 0.9% year-on-year increase, with 1.35 million Australians taking an ocean cruise during the year.

However CLIA Australasia MD Joel Katz noted growth of 3.4% in the number of Australians taking fly-cruise options in other regions,



“indicating demand remains strong in the Australian market”.

The slow local trend is expected to reverse in 2020/21, with Katz referring to several significant new vessel deployments as smaller, older ships are replaced with newer and larger options.

The construction of Brisbane’s International Cruise Terminal along with other infrastructure projects in Cairns, Eden and

Broome were also “expected to reignite growth,” he said.

Pictured at yesterday’s announcement are Tony Archbold, Holland America/Seabourn; Sture Myrmell, Carnival Australia CEO and CLIA Chairman; Andrew Millmore, Travel the World; Joel Katz, CLIA; and Grant Gilfillan, head of the NSW Ports Authority.

More from CLIA on **page three**.

No river statistics

CLIA’S annual statistics for 2018 (see **left**) have once again omitted the river cruise market, with CLIA MD Joel Katz telling **CW** it had not been possible to get all the river cruise lines to participate.

Hurtigruten announces major expansion push in Australia

NORWEGIAN-BASED cruise line Hurtigruten has revealed it will open a dedicated Australian office to help capitalise on local growth opportunities (**CW** breaking news).

The expansion plan will see a sales, marketing and operations team recruited locally, as well as the establishment of a dedicated local website.

Hurtigruten sourced around 60,000 guest nights from the Australian market in 2019, many

of which were secured via travel agents, with a local presence designed to leverage that growth moving forward.

“Hurtigruten’s story and experiences resonate very well with the Australian market, and our customer insights indicate that our travellers have a strong focus on sustainability,” said Hurtigruten Australia and APAC MD Damian Perry.

“The exclusively operational Hurtigruten Australia/NZ team

will be passionate like-minded experts and leaders that will support the travel industry and partnerships to build our brand,” he added.

No details have yet been released on the timing and location of the new office, with Perry telling **Cruise Weekly** there was “still a lot of development work to do” and the company is responding to the industry’s needs and support for both trade and traveller.

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Scenic Eclipse relocates



LUXURY polar vessel *Scenic Eclipse* has reportedly left the troubled Uljanik shipyard and docked at the Palumbo Group-owned Viktor Lenac to carry out final checks and painting in preparation for sea trials.

Officials for both the Uljanik and Viktor Lenac shipyards have stressed the relocation is part of routine procedure and not related to the ongoing labour issues at Uljanik.

According to information from Uljanik, *Eclipse* will return to its facility in Pula in two weeks.

Scenic recently stated construction on the ship was "moving along well", with all mechanical systems complete and all four main engines fully load tested meaning it can now operate under its own power.

Scenic announced earlier this year that *Eclipse* will debut in the market in Aug.

Sail like an Egyptian



VIKING Cruises has announced it will launch a new ship in Sep 2020 designed specifically to cater for cruises on the Nile River.

Viking Osiris is currently under construction and when it becomes operational, will double Viking-owned capacity in Egypt.

The vessel will be able to carry 82 passengers and features 41 staterooms, as well as a distinct Scandinavian design.

Coinciding with the launch will be the introduction of two new Pre-Cruise Extensions designed to improve guests' knowledge of Egyptology prior to arriving in Cairo for their cruise.

The five-day extensions to Viking's Pharaohs & Pyramids

itinerary provide passengers with access to archives and exhibits in London and Oxford that are not normally accessible to the public.

"Egypt has inspired explorers for generations, and it remains a top destination for many of our guests," said Viking Chairman Torstein Hagen.

"We remain committed to Egypt, and we look forward to introducing the historic treasures of the region to even more Viking guests," he added.

The news arrives one year after the company launched *Viking Ra*, a renovated vessel that is now Viking's first owned and operated ship on the Nile.

Pictured: A render of *Osiris*.

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CRUISE Lines International Association Australasia will produce a localised version of a new video series which aims to highlight the impact of the global cruise industry.

CLIA Chairman Sture Myrmell unveiled the plan at yesterday's 2018 Australian Ocean Source Market statistics release, saying CLIA would be in contact with local cruise leaders for their contributions in coming months.



AS CLIA always says, there's a cruise for everyone - even people who don't eat meat.

However one of **Cruise Weekly's** readers thought Norwegian Cruise Line had taken its culinary specialisation to the next level last week, with a comment on a photo posted from our voyage in Canada aboard *Norwegian Joy*.

The pic (**below**) cut off the first part of the ship's name, and MTA Mobile Travel Agents member Jodi Dalton posted "without my glasses on I thought you were on *Vegan Joy*".



Princess Alaska bonanza



PRINCESS Cruises has kicked off its 50th year of Alaskan cruises with the arrival of *Ruby Princess* into Ketchikan and Juneau on Sat.

The cruise line's record-breaking Alaskan season will see the deployment of seven Princess ships to the region's waters between May and Sep, with *Royal Princess* following suit and making her maiden voyage to Alaska on 11 May.

"*Royal Princess*' deployment reflects the high interest in Fly Cruise to Alaska from Australian and NZ guests," said Princess Cruises' Sales and Marketing

Director, Nick Ferguson.

"It's also a great opportunity for Australian and New Zealand guests to enjoy *Ruby Princess* before she arrives in Australia in October for our largest ever Australian and New Zealand season," he added.

New for the 2019 Alaska cruises is the grand opening of Fannie Q's Saloon at the Denali Princess Wilderness Lodge, where guests can experience locally inspired dishes in a modern saloon setting, along with the new Fireside Patio for light refreshments.

Pictured: The Inside Passage.

NSW tops cruise

PASSENGERS from NSW represented more than half of the Australian ocean cruise market, according to CLIA's annual figures (see p1).

The total of 1.35 million cruisers comprised 53% from NSW, but the state's share fell significantly in favour of other states, with Queensland contributing 22% of passengers and Victoria 13%.

The figures showed the average age of Australian cruise passengers was steady at 49 years, and the growth in short domestic cruises saw the average cruise length decline slightly from 9.1 days in 2017 to 8.8 days last year.

Port Botany politics

NSW Ports Authority CEO Grant Gilfillan said he has been treading carefully when it comes to proposed new facilities in Botany Bay, with uncertainty due to the recent NSW election meaning it "wasn't something to have a fight over when we weren't in a position to put anything on the table".

The possibility of a terminal in the Yarra Bay precinct has already garnered opposition, with Gilfillan telling attendees at yesterday's CLIA statistics announcement that in the current climate "you can't get a dialogue going - activists just want to shut you down".

He said NSW Ports was now giving Minister Andrew Constance the "opportunity to get settled" before pursuing a detailed business case.

Lyttelton gears up for cruise growth

NEW Zealand will boast its first ever custom-built facility for passenger cruise ships next year, with the Lyttelton Port Company confirming the Nov 2020 opening of its newly constructed berth.

Large cruise vessels have been unable to berth at Lyttelton since the Feb 2011 Christchurch earthquake, but with the new infrastructure in place the Port will be able to handle ships carrying over 5,000 passengers and 2,000 staff.

More than 70 bookings for the 2020/21 cruise season are already in place according to Lyttelton Port Company CEO Peter Davie, with the destination allowing passengers to visit Christchurch and the Canterbury region as well as travel by train to the NZ West Coast.

A video of the facility is online at cruiseweekly.com.au/videos.

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