

# AFTA INDUSTRY NOTICE

The AFTA Travel Accreditation Scheme (ATAS) is the cornerstone of the Australian travel industry. It sets standards, future proofs and protects the integrity of our industry.

ATAS is the means by which both consumers and trade can identify trusted, reliable and quality travel businesses.

**AFTA and ACS does not take its role lightly and does not make cancellations without good reason!**

In the last 6 months, two large scale, non-accredited wholesalers have become insolvent. It is a stark reminder to all industry that if a business is NOT accredited – ask why not?

It is unacceptable that a company can make statements and issue press releases which turn out to be misleading and deceptive. It is a clear demonstration of the lack of integrity of these companies.

AFTA is NOT to blame for the demise of these companies. Poor financial management is the only cause of a company becoming insolvent.

**AFTA recommends that travel agency owners only work with reputable accredited wholesalers and tour operators.**

All CATO members are required to be ATAS accredited.

AFTA has 63 years of representing, supporting, and innovating for the Australian Travel Industry. In 2020 we will continue to seek new solutions to provide all involved with confidence in the travel value chain and make the payment eco-system in the Australian travel industry more robust.





## Coronavirus cancellations making waves

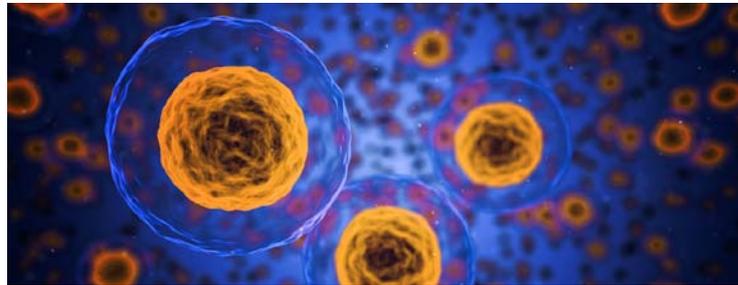
**MORE** than 82% of Australian travel companies, including those in the cruise sector, have experienced cancellations as a result of the ongoing coronavirus crisis, according to an exclusive *Travel Daily* readership poll.

Of those cancellations noted, respondents listed trips to Asia as accounting for the most angst (47.4%), while 28.9% of scrapped holidays were to China alone.

Interestingly, the travel reticence also extends outside of Asia, with approximately one in seven aborted trips being to "other regions of the world".

Forward bookings have also taken a hit, with close to a quarter of respondents claiming "many bookings" had been cancelled, while 47.6% said "some" level of business had been lost due to the virus.

Also of concern is the claim that travel inquiry is down overall, with a 40.7% reduction in in-



bound travel enquiries noted by respondents, while there was also a 30.9% dip for Asia travel inquiry.

The survey allowed for the submission of anonymous commentary on the unfolding coronavirus situation, with worries over misinformation the most common concern.

"Our industry is in for the hardest times we have seen since 9/11, in my 15 years, I have never dealt with so much misinformation, anxiety-driven cancellations and such a big impact on my current bookings by way of cancellation," one

respondent said.

Another noted the importance of the coming month in determining what the overall impact on travel would be.

"The coming two to three weeks will be critical in determining the final impact, if new infection rates are stabilised and reduced from now, this could limit the overall impact," they noted.

"However, hysteria is everywhere - e.g. Chinatown restaurants being empty, people cancelling trips to destinations where not one case has been reported".

### Cruise Weekly today

*Cruise Weekly* today features two pages of all the latest cruise industry news, a front cover wrap from **AFTA** plus a full page from:

- Tauck

### HAL ship all at sea

**THE** ongoing drama for Holland America Line's (HAL) *Westerdam* vessel looks set to continue, with a planned disembarkation in Bangkok now looking unlikely after the Thai Government said it would refuse the cruise line permission to do so.

The ship had already been turned away from several ports including in Yokohama and the Philippines (*CW* 04 Feb), amid fears of a further spread of the coronavirus.

However, HAL has repeatedly denied that any of its pax are infected with the illness, stating it had "no reason to believe there are any cases of coronavirus on board the ship despite media reports", and also clarified that *Westerdam* is not in a state of quarantine.

Responding directly to the latest developments, HAL said "we are actively working this matter and will provide an update when we are able, we know this is confusing for our guests and their families and we greatly appreciate their patience".



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### itravel moves on NZ

#### MOBILE travel agent

network itravel has revealed it will expand into the New Zealand market for the first time from 01 Mar.

"New Zealanders love everything we stand for, family, transparency, collaboration, better returns and, most importantly, innovation," said itravel's MD Steve Labroski.



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### Spirit dumps Asia

**NORWEGIAN** Cruise Line (NCL) has confirmed that all Asia itineraries previously scheduled aboard *Norwegian Spirit* from 15 Apr to 07 Dec have been cancelled due to the ongoing threat of the coronavirus outbreak.

All guests booked on these sailings will receive a full refund, as well as a 10% future cruise credit in compensation.

The cruise line has also stated that for airfares purchased independently, NCL will cover up to \$300 per person for any air change fees.

## Enjoying a chilly embrace



A RARE moment was enjoyed by passengers aboard Silversea's *Silver Cloud* and *Silver Whisper* this month, with the two ships rendezvousing in Antarctica's remote Wilhelmina Bay.

The moment was particularly significant for *Whisper* which became the first of the cruise line's ships to visit the continent during a world cruise.

"[The meeting] signifies the range of experiences on offer with our cruise line," said Silversea's Senior Vice President of Expeditions and Experiences Development Conrad Combrink.

"Whether travelling on the first-ever seven-continent World Cruise, or journeying deep into the white continent on the most luxurious ice-class ship afloat, our guests can enjoy a wealth of unforgettable experiences in ultimate comfort," he added.

The cruise line has beefed up its commitment to Antarctica in recent times, most notably introducing the Antarctica Bridge (*CW* 05 Dec 2019), a

new fly-cruise service that will offer guests the options of flying Business Class over the Drake Passage.

**MEANWHILE**, Silversea Cruises has announced that its travel agent appreciation program, Campioni di Silversea, has officially launched in Australia.

Initially unveiled in Oct (*CW* 23 Oct 2019), the program has awarded its top 20 highest selling agencies for 2019 with a trip on a luxury weekend event.

### Az-Amazing event

**AZAMARA** is celebrating 10 years of destination immersion experiences with the rendezvous of three of its ships in Slovenia later this year.

*Azamara Journey*, *Azamara Pursuit* and *Azamara Quest* will port in Koper on 08 Oct for a signature AzAmazing Evening event, which will be followed by an exclusive post-voyage land program for Le Club Voyage guests.



### CLIA UPDATE

with Joel Katz  
MD, CLIA Australasia

#### Cruise sector is prepared

**WITHOUT** doubt the tourism sector faces significant challenges this year, and the cruise industry in particular has had to take swift action to address int'l concerns around the coronavirus outbreak.

The new measures, screening procedures and travel restrictions put in place by CLIA ocean cruise lines globally are part of a concerted effort to ensure the health and safety of guests remains our top priority.

Working closely with health authorities and governments around the world, we are closely monitoring developments and will modify policies as necessary with the utmost consideration for the wellbeing of passengers and crew.

Fortunately, most cruises around the world are continuing to operate as usual and the extra measures CLIA cruise lines have put in place will help reassure travellers.

CLIA this week gave travel agent members important new details on how cruise lines are responding to the virus, and we encourage all agents to review this carefully.

The information can be viewed via the CLIA website.

Our industry is highly experienced when it comes to handling the medical needs of guests and is also a resilient and responsive industry.

Backed by the exceptional care and support our travel agent members are able to give their clients, we aim to overcome these challenges successfully in the near future.




## PORTHOLE

**AS IF** cruising wasn't enough of an excuse for euphoria, some guests choose to heighten their joy even more by saying 'I do' to their significant other.

So spare some envy for P&O Cruises' official Wedding Planner Natasha Bhan, who is on the threshold of celebrating 500 weddings at sea.

Bhan noted one of her most memorable floating ceremonies was the union of Corey and Belinda de Bruyn (pictured).

They were her first ceremony on *Pacific Explorer*, and are now "cruise-converts", Bhan beams.




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Every Thu we publish our consumer newsletter - **Travel & Cruise Weekly** - sign up free at [www.travelandcruiseweekly.com.au](http://www.travelandcruiseweekly.com.au).

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- Private Tauck Shore Excursions in the Galápagos Islands with expert naturalist guides – averaging two daily – for an up-close experience with some of the most unusual and intriguing species in the world
- On-Tour Air (5 flights)
- Lunch at a Peruvian horse ranch & dinner at a colonial mansion in Lima; two nights at a 5-star, 16th-century monastery in Cusco
- Scenic train journeys to and from Machu Picchu and an overnight stay adjacent to the Citadels



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### Antarctica

#### 13 days from Buenos Aires return

Departing 4, 6, 16 & 26 Jan; 7 Feb; 7 Dec 2021 onboard *Le Boreal / Le Soleal / Le Lyrial*

Deluxe Cabin Deck 3

**\$17,890\***pp twin share | **\$24,232\***pp single

#### TAUCK VALUE INCLUDES

- Shore Excursions to islands in the Antarctic Archipelago that are guided by expert naturalists, ornithologists, historians or oceanographers
- Two nights in a premium hotel in Buenos Aires in the heart of the city
- Guided city sightseeing in Buenos Aires includes a tango dance performance and demonstration



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### Panama Canal & Costa Rica

#### 12 days from Panama City to San Jose (or reverse)

Departing 9, 16 & 30 Jan; 6 Feb 2021 onboard *Le Dumont D'Urville*

Deluxe Cabin Deck 3

**\$11,090\***pp twin share | **\$15,536\***pp single

#### TAUCK VALUE INCLUDES

- Tauck's experienced naturalist, Tauck Director and local guides join the cruise aboard ship, leading excursions ashore to enrich your experience of the jungle, water and flora & fauna
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- 7 night cruise aboard one of PONANT's new Explorer Class yachts
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