



Cruise Weekly today

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

US ports open

AUTHORITIES in the United States have confirmed that the nation's seaports are open to returning cruise ships, with passengers able to disembark and fly home.

A "National Interest Exemption" has been issued by the US Department of Homeland Security, covering all cruise ship passengers.

US citizens and permanent residents can stay in America, while foreigners are permitted to fly to their home countries - even if they are subject to other regulations because they may have been in Europe in the preceding 14-day period.

Special arrangements for cruise ships

PASSENGER cruise ships currently sailing out of Australia have either returned or are en route back to port, under special arrangements confirmed by Australian Border Force Commissioner, Michael Outram.

On the weekend Prime Minister Scott Morrison announced a ban on cruise ship arrivals if vessels had visited foreign ports, but Outram has since clarified some exceptions are being made.

"Any vessel that was at sea when the announcement was made is allowed to return to Australia," he said, confirming that dispensation was being given to states and territories to ensure nobody gets stranded at sea, "particularly Australians".

"If there's no sickness on board, the arrangements are that the vessel can come into port," he confirmed, with incoming passengers given the



Pictured: Michael Outram (ABC News).

same information about 14-day self-isolation as that provided to arriving airline passengers.

"And then Australians on board, they can get home and self-isolate...for international passengers, straight to the airport, straight home," he added.

The clarification came amid a further escalation of COVID-19 measures announced by Morrison this morning, with the unprecedented imposition of a Level 4 "Do Not Travel" advisory

on all international destinations.

The Government has also banned non-essential indoor gatherings of more than 100 people, and this morning warned that the stringent measures could be in place for up to six months.

The flexible approach being applied by the Australian Border Force is in contrast to some other countries around the world, which are currently denying entry to a number of cruise ships - more details on **page two**.

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Medical emergency

ROYAL Caribbean's *Voyager of the Seas* conducted a medical evacuation yesterday following a passenger suffering a stroke.

The vessel has since resumed sailing and returned to Sydney as scheduled this morning.

The voyage departed Sydney on 07 Mar, visiting Pacific destinations such as Noumea in New Caledonia, and Mystery Island in Vanuatu, with all disembarking guests required to self-isolate for 14 days because the cruise was servicing an int'l itinerary.

Ships left all at sea



TIGHTER travel restrictions implemented in Chile in response to the COVID-19 crisis has prevented Hurtigruten's *Roald Amundsen* from docking at the port of Punta Arenas, leaving the cruise line searching for new options to transport its passengers home safely.

The 500-passenger expedition vessel was conducting a 17-day Antarctica expedition cruise with a large group of Australian doctors on board, and was due to call into the Chilean port city yesterday local time.

Hurtigruten's Managing Director Asia Pacific Damian Perry said the cruise line was working on ways to minimise the disruption the situation will cause to its guests.

"Our passengers and crew are our top priority and all are well, our taskforce's focus is to get all passengers home as quickly and safely as possible and we are regularly updating our passengers on board with our plans to get them home," he told *ABC News*.

There is no suggestion that any passengers on board the ship have contracted the virus.

MEANWHILE, Royal Caribbean Cruises' *Azamara Pursuit* has also been left stranded off the coast of Chile after authorities there refused to let passengers on board disembark.

There are no cases of COVID-19 on board, with reports suggesting the ship carrying 74 Australians is making its way north to Miami to let passengers off.

Chile will keep its ports closed until at least 30 Sep.

In further disruption, Norwegian Cruise Line (NCL) has confirmed the modification of three itineraries, including *Norwegian Jewel's* 23-day current Australia and French Polynesia voyage, which is now making its way to Honolulu to disembark after a planned dock in Auckland was scuttled by port restrictions.

Norwegian Spirit has revised its 21-day itinerary from Dubai, with details regarding alternative arrangements to be confirmed, while NCL's *Norwegian Epic* also ditched its scheduled disembarkation in San Juan, Puerto Rico, and instead arrived in Port Canaveral yesterday.



AUSTRALIAN CRUISE ASSOCIATION
ACA UPDATE
with Jill Abel - CEO

Travel industry unifies

I WAS delighted to read the story of the couple who, having had their cruise cancelled, decided not to be defeated by this news.

Instead they dressed in their best shipboard gear, poured themselves a glass of bubbles and celebrated their anniversary watching a YouTube video of the ocean in their living room.

This, to me, is indicative of a much larger story of the resilient spirit that we are seeing played out every day right now across Australia.

There is no doubt we as a community are struggling to find our footing.

The travel industry is hurting badly, and we will all face challenging times ahead, at the same time, I am constantly inspired by the care we are taking with each decision we make.

Even prior to the PM calling for a suspension on the arrival of cruise ships from foreign ports, most cruise lines had taken an unprecedented position to halt their operations for the purpose of public health and safety.

Since then, ACA has worked closely with CLIA and the cruise lines to get ships and passengers home with the least amount of disruption.

I commend our members who are working to support this effort.

It is hard to see the light at the end of the jetty now but it is fair to say a unified and reasonable response to the current situation will hold us all in good stead for the future of cruising when the timing is right.



IT'S EASY to be all doom and gloom at the moment in the cruise sector, so here's a novel way that Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko is suggesting people can mow down some of their anxiety.

In a televised address, he told his citizens that watching all of the COVID-19 news on TV can be stressful, and that heading out to the countryside and driving a tractor was the best way to heal from the health crisis.

Way to plow through it!



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