



RCI India pause

ROYAL Caribbean International (RCI) has suspended all Indian crew member assignments until further notice.

Indian seafarers will not be able to board RCI ships at this stage after the cruise line decided to temporarily cancel all assignments for nationals and residents of the country.

According to a letter sent to RCI crews, the decision is based on a range of reasons, and related to recently announced travel restrictions and complexities with crew member movement to and from India.

"It's always unfortunate when we must cancel assignments but we believe this is a prudent decision at this time," the letter says.

"We know how much our crew look forward to returning to work after waiting for so long...we also understand how tough it can be to have to make last minute travel changes."

RCI added although the course of action was not preferred, it is the reality of the quick changes the cruise line needs to make based on different reasons that are often "unplanned and beyond our direct control."

According to *Crew Center*, around 300 Indian crew members were assigned to join *Anthem of the Seas*.

Perry urges policy clarity

THE indecisiveness of Australia's politicians is at the heart of the country's reluctance to travel, believes Hurtigruten Managing Director APAC Damian Perry.

The cruise line has been conducting specific promotions within the Australian marketplace to get a clear understanding of what travellers are willing to commit to, and has found the bulk of the country is still in a travel "hibernation", owing to the opacity of lawgivers.

"Committed travellers are already on board, but the others have still got to move forward, and this is due to the lack of clarity from our policymakers," Perry told *Cruise Weekly*.

"They have left the market and the industry in flux, they've walked away from it because they can't give any clarity on their processes, their thinking, their timelines.

"As you can see from the vaccine rollout which has been a disaster in its own right, it seems like there's a huge amount of work that needs to be done to give some confidence back to the traveller and the marketplace."

Unfortunately, Perry noted the change in Minister for Tourism from Simon Birmingham to Dan Tehan had also not yielded any positivity.

"Same old," the Hurtigruten MD APAC confessed.

"They've had a long time to plan this out and think about this and

work forward, but they've taken such a conservative approach and no-one is willing to put their hand up and put themselves out there and say this is the reality of what's going to come."

Fortunately, Perry noted "there's been a huge commitment to Antarctica" for those keen to travel, particularly via Hurtigruten's flight inclusive package and flexible booking terms.

With both Antarctica and Hurtigruten's traditional Norwegian Coastal Express popular in Australia, Perry noted the cruise line's strategic structural change (*CW* yesterday) would see similar aggressiveness to promote both sides of the business in this country.

"Over the last couple of years Australians have been lapping up our Expedition product," he enthused.

"We'll be putting similar effort into both businesses, but we can now be really specific.

"The growth aspirations are there from us, the market and the clientele."

The structural change will see Hurtigruten's business split into a Coastal Express and Expedition arm.

Cruise Weekly today

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

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Travellers will discover the swirling onion domes of Moscow before cruising the country's canals and waterways into St Petersburg.

Guests will then travel by rail to the Finnish capital of Helsinki, known as the White City, where they will immerse themselves in the country's culture, cuisine, architecture, and history.

Cruise sentiment high

RESPONDENTS to an SMP and Stollznow survey exploring what pent up demand looks like for Australian travellers has indicated that, if allowed to travel overseas for a holiday, 10% would elect for an ocean cruise in the next 12 months.

This would equate to 1.5 million Australians craving a cruise, meaning pent-up demand is ahead of the number of Australians who cruised during the record-setting 2018 season (1.34 million).

The study also captured respondent characteristics and demographics, with males (62%) more likely to take a cruise than females (38%), which correlated with the will to travel overseas (60% for males versus 40% for females).

When viewed from a state and territory perspective, respondents from New South

Wales were most likely to opt for an ocean cruise.

"While this is based on intention, we can say with confidence that subject to state borders remaining open and our international one opening up in greater capacity, then travel is on the cards for close to 10 million Australians" said Director Neil Stollznow.

"This would see billions of dollars transacted right throughout the economy and bring much needed reprieve to struggling sectors decimated by the impact COVID-19 has had."

Stollznow said the around 3.5 million Australians were "fence-sitters", and still unconvinced of travel over the next 12 months, which is a huge potential segment of the market worth pursuing, and would be a considerable win for industry to convert them into customers.

Disney vax ruling

DISNEY Cruise Line has announced its cruises in the United Kingdom will only be accepting vaccinated guests (**CW** 19 Apr).

A full coronavirus vaccination will be required for all adult passengers of 18 years and over, while those under 18 will need to have a negative coronavirus test at their own expense prior to boarding.

While there are restrictions from the Government of the United Kingdom on travel and cruising, a coronavirus vaccination is not one of them, but almost all cruise lines restarting in the country have now made it a prerequisite for embarkation.

Voyages will go on sale to the general public on 30 Apr, with *Disney Magic* to operate short cruises of mostly two- and three-nights.



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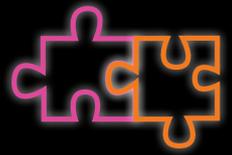
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Seattle CLIA Live event



THE Port of Seattle has thanked Gold Coast-based travel advisors at CLIA Live last week.

Around 50 agents and cruise line representatives attended the inaugural two-day event, which saw the Port host an intimate networking get-together at the Aviary Rooftop Bar at Mantra Southport Sharks, to thank the industry for its incredible resilience and support over the past year.

The Port's event offered agents and cruise lines the chance to reconnect, and let them know that while sailing to Alaska from Seattle is off the cards right now, Seattle and Washington's national parks, wineries, waterways, and wide-open spaces eagerly await their return.

As a thank you, all attendees were treated to a gift card from Starbucks, one of Seattle's most well-known institutions.

"We're incredibly proud to represent a destination that is forward thinking and supportive of agents," said Port of Seattle

Account Manager Amanda McCoy.

Pictured: the Our Vacations Centre team enjoys a Seattle-sponsored tittle.

MSC beach exp

MSC Cruises' *MSC Seaside* will now visit two brand new destinations, Taranto and Siracusa, when it joins *MSC Grandiosa* in the Mediterranean from May as part of the cruise line's restart (**CW 05 Mar**).

The visit to Taranto will also see guests enjoy a private beach experience during *Seaside's* Med season.

"We have worked to privatise three lidos with all the facilities of a beach club so that our guests can enjoy this beautiful stretch of coast in Puglia, close to Taranto," explained Chief Executive Gianni Onorato.

"We have also established a blueprint for this type of experience".



TAKE notes *Ever Given* - this is how it's done.

Huge superyacht *Project 817* has squeezed through the Netherlands' narrow canals with photographer Tom van Oossanen on hand to capture the astonishing scenes.

Built by Dutch shipyard Feadship, *Project 817* was transported from its Kaag Island facility to the North Sea - **HERE**.

Alternate check-in

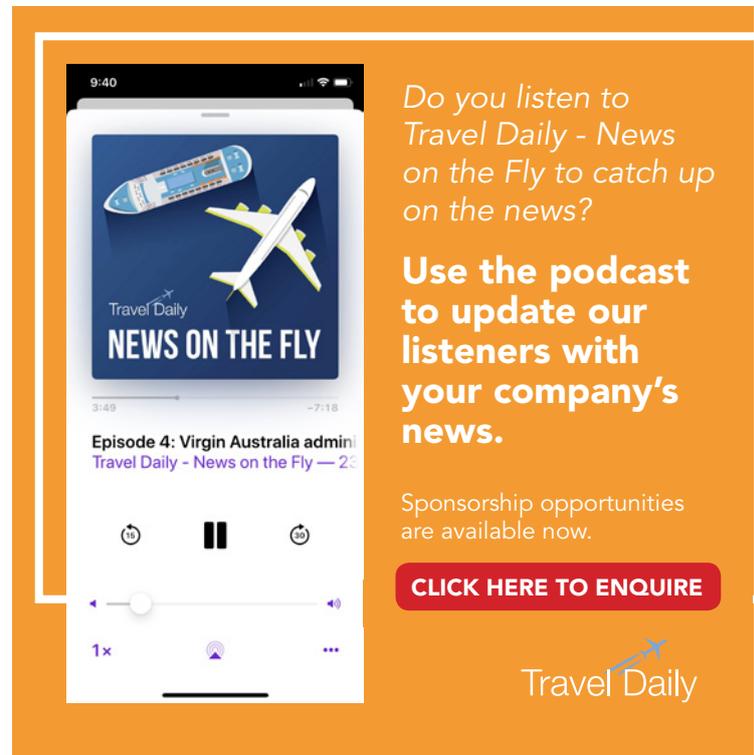
ROYAL Caribbean International (RCI) will use the four-star British Colonial Hilton Nassau to check in passengers for *Adventure of the Seas*.

The ship will begin offering cruises from Nassau in Jun, but guests will check in from the downtown hotel as opposed to the cruise terminal, according to Nassau Cruise Port Chief Executive Michael Maura.

He told local news their plan is to use one of the British Colonial Hilton's reception rooms for check-in.

Passengers' bags will go from the hotel to the cruise port, where they will be screened before being placed on the vessel.

Luggage scanning equipment will be installed to screen passengers' bags, and Nassau Cruise Port is working extensively with the cruise lines and Bahamian law enforcement.



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