



Cruise Weekly today

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

Thousands to attend CLIA forum

OVER 1,800 registrations have been lodged for today's online Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA) Cruise Forum 2021, which is being held in place of the previously planned Cruise360 gathering, which was postponed due to COVID.

Four sessions are taking place across the day, including an opening State of the Industry panel at 10am AEST moderated by **Cruise Weekly's** Bruce Piper, featuring CLIA Global President & CEO, Kelly Craighead; Royal Caribbean MD & CLIA Australasia Chair, Gavin Smith; Carnival Australia President Sture Myrmell; Ponant Chair APAC Sarina Bratton; and Norwegian Cruise Line VP APAC Ben Angell.

Other webinars include an 11.30am panel on Rebuilding Confidence, a session at 1.30pm on Achieving New Relevance as a Cruise Specialist Travel Agent, and the final gathering for the day at 3pm entitled The Critical Partnerships Supporting Restart Success - for full coverage of the day see Mon's issue of **Cruise Weekly**.

CLIA outlines path to recovery

CRUISE Lines International Association (CLIA) has today unveiled a four-phase pathway for the resumption of cruising in Australia (pictured), aligning the stages presented by PM Scott Morrison and based on vaccination targets with key milestones as borders reopen.

The pathway will help provide certainty for the more than 18,000 Australians whose jobs are reliant on cruising, according to CLIA Managing Director Australasia Joel Katz.

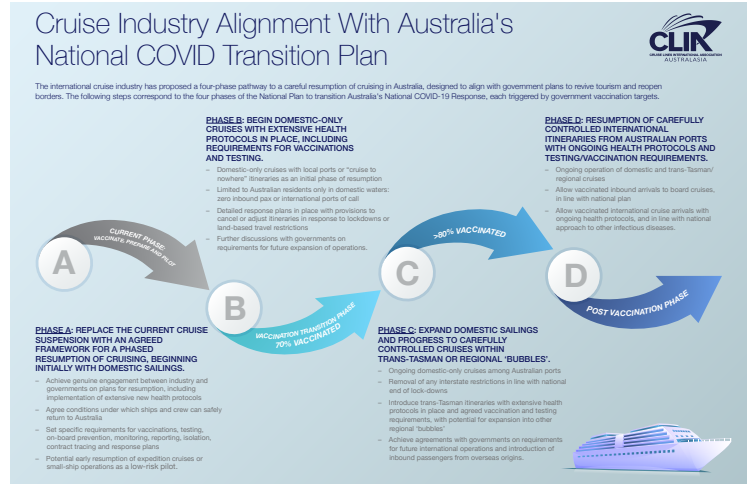
"This is about having plans agreed in advance, so that we're ready as conditions improve with the rising vaccination rate," he said.

"Our governments have created a four-phase plan to reopen Australia, and we're now calling for our own four-phase pathway to be included in this process."

The current phase envisions agreement between industry and governments on a framework for resumption, instead of the current blanket ban on international ships, which at this stage is in place until 17 Sep.

This could even include the potential in the near term to pilot more small domestic expedition cruises as health conditions allow.

Once 70% of the country's adult population is vaccinated, the "Vaccination Transition Phase" would commence, with the resumption of limited domestic-only cruises within an Australian



bubble, in line with the industry's extensive health protocols.

The 80% vaccination stage or "Consolidation Phase", associated with significant easing of restrictions in the National Cabinet-approved plan would see more extensive domestic sailings, and the commencement of carefully controlled trans-Tasman itineraries and regional "bubble" sailings when conditions permit.

The final "Post-Vaccination Phase" would allow for the resumption of carefully controlled international itineraries from Australian ports.

Katz noted CLIA's plan would allow the implementation of the extensive health protocols developed by cruise lines globally in response to COVID-19, which have so far seen almost one million people successfully undertake sailings including in the

United States, Europe and parts of Asia.

"Cruising involves long lead-times ahead of operations, so we need a plan in place now so we can work towards reviving an industry worth more than \$5 billion a year to communities around Australia," he said.

At Australia's current vaccination rate, it's possible the 80% threshold dictated by the Prime Minister's plan for Phase C's easing of restrictions could be reached by the end of Nov.

With just three weeks until 17 Sep, Minister for Health Greg Hunt is expected to give an update on the status of the current human biosecurity order on international travel and cruising in the near future.

An infographic (pictured) showcasing the four phases is available for download **HERE**.

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FMC crackdown

THE United States' Federal Maritime Commission (FMC) has proposed cancellation rule changes to protect American cruise ship passengers.

Commissioner Louis Sola is proposing new rules for refunds and wants to hear from passengers.

The proposed rules, as outlined in a 69-page Notice of Proposed Rulemaking on Passenger Vessel Financial Responsibility, are a result of consumer experiences with cruises cancelled due to COVID-19.

Among the changes is a requirement for cruise lines to give consumers a full refund within 60 days if a sailing is cancelled, or boarding is delayed by three days or more, for any reason other than by government order.

MSC going big on fly-cruise

EXCLUSIVE

THE Middle East's emergence as a major airline economy is behind MSC Cruises' investment in the region (*CW* 03 May), Chief Executive Officer Gianni Onorato has told *CW*.

Ahead of Cruise Lines International Association's Cruise Forum 2021 (see **page 1**), Onorato said the Middle East's arrival as a domain for some of the world's best airlines gave MSC a fantastic chance to solidify itself as a leader in fly-cruise.

"[The Middle East] is home for some of the world's major airlines and finest airports which are incredibly important factors for international travellers, and extremely significant for us too in all of our source markets for guests," he said.

"The region has something

attractive to offer for everyone, whether it be culture and traditions that date back many thousands of years, somewhere new to visit, amazing beaches, UNESCO World Heritage sites, fabulous weather and the chance to enjoy a well-earned break.

"For this coming winter we have in place a range of fly-cruise packages for international guests to embark our ships in both Dubai and Abu Dhabi in the United Arab Emirates, Doha in Qatar and Jeddah in Saudi Arabia."

Onorato flagged there is great consumer demand for the region, which was likely to increase as MSC embarks on its inaugural Red Sea sailings.

The cruise line plans to be in the Middle-East for the long-term too, having recently made a commitment to operate Red Sea cruises from the port of Jeddah, as Saudi Arabia itself continues to place a great emphasis on developing its tourism and cruise infrastructure.

The Middle East is just one spoke of a larger global strategy to put money into destinations around the world, Onorato said.

"We have planned further investments in ports all around the world with developments of new cruise terminals in Miami, one that is bound to become a landmark in the world's capital of cruising, as well as Barcelona, Spain and Ancona, Italy," he said.

"Later this year we will open a new facility in Durban, South Africa...we also signed a joint venture with the Palumbo Group to operate the Palumbo Malta shipyard."



A RIVER to rival Western Australia's Pink Lake?

An Alabama river will turn red one day next week, as it undergoes testing from the Alabama Department of Environmental Management.

The state government agency will be testing the water flow on the Flint River (pictured) from Hazel Green to Owens Cross Roads in Northern Alabama.

The test will involve red dye inserted into the river at different locations in order to observe flow.

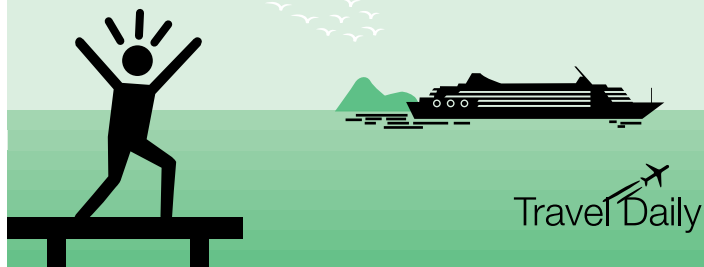
The red dye is not harmful to man or river.



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Joining the flock

SWAN Hellenic has welcomed Lori Sheller as Vice President of Sales & Marketing, North America.

Sheller will join Swan Hellenic with immediate effect, reporting directly to Senior Vice President of Global Sales & Marketing Alfredo Spadon.

She joins Swan Hellenic with more than 20 years of experience in the cruise and travel industry, serving most recently as MSC Cruises Senior Vice President of Strategic Sales in the United States.