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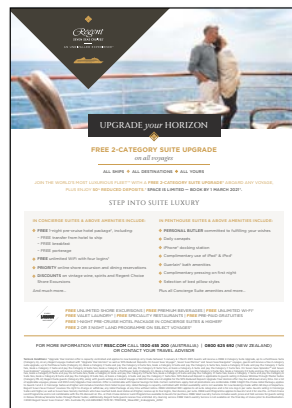
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Murray operator demands rule changes

MURRAY River Paddlesteamers is demanding the federal and state govts make changes to pandemic-related legislation to help save the peak season for rural Victorian tourism operators.

The Vic State Government's New South Wales Border Crossing Permit Scheme Directions allow NSW residents in the "border bubble" between the two states to travel anywhere in Victoria, but Murray River Paddlesteamers Director Craig Burgess is requesting the Vic State Govt to also allow Victorians to enter the NSW border bubble.

"We are calling on the Victorian Government to allow all Victorians to enter the approved NSW LGAs all along the Murray River," Burgess pled.

"This simple decision will effectively save the summer holiday season for the tourism industry by allowing Victorians to

stay on the NSW side of the river and enjoy all the attractions on both sides".

"If it is fine for any NSW border bubble resident to travel to any destination in Victoria, including Melbourne, then why kill off the entire river tourism industry at the busiest time of the year by not allowing Victorians to enter the same area in NSW".

Murray River Paddlesteamers explained the quick decision of the Victorian State Government to close its border with New South Wales has had enormous flow-on effects for tourism operators, which were only just starting to recover from the previous border closure.

As a result, many businesses that enjoyed a particularly good Nov and Dec will not qualify for JobKeeper from Jan through Mar, with Murray River Paddlesteamers calling on the

Australian Government and Victorian Govt to implement a second JobKeeper test.

"The second test is the six-month period, Jul through Dec 2020...if this second test shows GST turnover to be down more than 30% YOY then the business qualifies for JobKeeper 3," Murray River Paddlesteamers explained.

"The Victorian Government could easily implement this second test via Business Victoria and provide it as a top-up grant to tourism businesses which have been the hardest hit by the second closure of the Victoria/New South Wales [border]."

It is not the first time this week the line has tangled with the state, after MD Rohan Burgess slammed the state's coronavirus hotline for allegedly misinforming Victorians they are currently forbidden from sailing on the Murray due to the pandemic.

Cruise Weekly today

Cruise Weekly today features two pages of all the latest cruise industry news plus a front full page from **Regent Seven Seas Cruises**.

RSSC upgrade

REGENT Seven Seas Cruises (RSSC) is inviting travellers to upgrade their horizon with its latest free two-category suite upgrade offer on all voyages.

The offer is available on all ships and all destinations, and includes a 50% reduced down payment.

Book before Mar to access the offer, which also includes a free, one-night, pre-cruise hotel package that comes with a Concierge suite, or a Penthouse suite with a butler.

Head to the **front page** for more details, and an Upgrade Your Horizons toolkit.

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*Offers vary per sailing. See Terms & Conditions for details.

FIND OUT MORE




PORTHOLE

A FISHING boat has washed up in Japan almost 10 years after it was lost in the Tohoku earthquake & tsunami.

The tiny boat was swept away, and may have reached as far as waters off the West Coast of the United States.

The boat was found off Hachijo-jima earlier this month, a volcanic island in the Philippine Sea, almost a decade after it disappeared into the ocean off Kesennuma.

After checking its registration, a local fishing cooperative confirmed the 5.5-metre fibreglass boat, now weighed down with a large amount of coral, once belonged to the Kesennuma fishing fleet.

It is not the first time such a finding has taken place either - in Apr 2012, just over a year after the earthquake, a couple living on Middleton Island in the Gulf of Alaska found a soccer ball with markings which identified it as belonging to a school in Iwate, one of the three prefectures hit hardest by the natural disaster.

Virgin offer

VIRGIN Voyages is ringing in 2021 with a new cruise deal, allowing travellers to book any voyage until 09 Jan and receive 10% off, up to US\$400 in onboard credit and an extra US\$100 towards a bar tab - www.virginvoyages.com.

Carnival stops & starts



IT HAS been a mixed 24 hours for Carnival Corporation, with Costa Cruises confirming a restart date of 31 Jan, but Holland America Line and Princess Cruises pausing their cruise vacations through to 30 Apr and 14 May respectively.

Costa Deliziosa (pictured) will restart operations in Italy at the end of the month, sailing itineraries originally planned for *Costa Smeralda*, with options of three, four and seven days.

The restart date will mean other Costa sailings up until then have been cancelled.

"The decision to operate *Costa Deliziosa* will allow greater itinerary flexibility to respond to any changes in the local COVID-19 scenario while maintaining a unique and exclusive cruise experience on board one of the most beautiful and welcoming ships of Costa fleet," the cruise line said, adding *Costa Smeralda's* deployment would be announced

shortly.

The news is not as positive for Holland America and Princess, which are both continuing to prepare and develop their plans to meet the Framework for Conditional Sailing Order issued by the United States' Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (**CW** 09 Nov).

Holland America's cancellations will include voyages to Canada, the Caribbean, the Mediterranean, the Mexican Riviera, New England and the West Coast of the United States.

The cruise line also will cancel all Alaska cruises through to mid-May, and on *Eurodam*, *Oosterdam* and *Zuiderdam* through to early Jun.

A range of Land+Sea Journeys have also been cancelled.

Affected Princess sailings include early season Alaska and Europe cruises, as well as sailings to Coastal California and the Caribbean.

Tradewind deal

TRADEWIND Voyages is inviting travellers to sail through the Whitsundays during the 2021 Christmas Season aboard *Golden Horizon*, the world's biggest sailing ship.

The Great Barrier Reef & Festive Season voyage, sailing from 21 Dec, is currently on sale as part of a new 16-night stay & sail package offered by Cruise Traveller.

Travelling from Cairns to Sydney, the trip will allow guests to snorkel off beaches in the Whitsundays Islands on Christmas Day, watch the New Year's Eve fireworks from the ship off the Gold Coast and relax at sea on the first day of 2022.

The package is available until 31 Mar from \$9,530 per person, twin-share, and starts with a one-night hotel stay in Cairns, followed up with the 15-day voyage, which visits Townsville, the Whitsundays Islands, Mooloolaba, Brisbane, Trial Bay and Newcastle.

For more information, **CLICK HERE**.

RCI wave sale

ROYAL Caribbean International (RCI) is hosting a Jan wave season sale.

Savings of up to 40% per stateroom are available, as is up to \$250 of discounts per guest.

Crown and Anchor Society members will also receive double points on all 2021 sailings - call 1800 754 500 or 0800-102-123 in New Zealand.