



Aurora “postpones” Australia season

AURORA Expeditions Chief Executive Officer Monique Ponfoort said the company has taken a “leadership position to deliver a clear and committed pathway forward,” by announcing the continued suspension of operations until Nov (*CW* breaking news).

Yesterday’s announcement is being described as a “postponement, not a cancellation,” with Ponfoort telling *Cruise Weekly* that while Aurora continues to receive positive support from its discussions with state and federal governments to bring *Greg Mortimer* (pictured) down under, the cruise line “remains unable to give clarity to passengers on departure voyage dates”.

The postponement of the start of Aurora’s potential spring and summer 2021 sailing season from Australia will be in place until the



situation is clearer, but Ponfoort said the cruise line “remains committed to operating a full Antarctic Peninsula program starting in Nov 2021”.

Guests who have booked a voyage on the suspended program will be able to receive a full refund, apply their deposit toward another booking, or leave it as a credit with Aurora.

“Our loyal guests, crew and trade partners are our number one priority,” Ponfoort said.

Providing certainty for the industry demonstrated the “utmost respect to both the Government and our guests, staff, expedition team and our travel trade partners.

“We are so looking forward to getting back to what we do best - endlessly exploring on our ships designed for discovery - and returning to Antarctica in our 30th anniversary year as a world leader of polar expeditions in Nov 2021,” she added.

Cruise Weekly today

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

Ponant Pro update

PONANT has introduced two new updates to its Pro Area agent portal.

A Sustainability Toolkit is now available, home to a selection of videos, articles, flyers and other content to help travel advisors improve their knowledge of the cruise line’s sustainable practices.

There is now also a Ponant Sales Essentials Section, which is filled with the tools you need to become a pro at selling the cruise line.

Sales Essentials features fleet information, learning modules, flyers, and information sheets.

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NCL appointment

NORWEGIAN Cruise Line (NCL) has appointed Eamonn Ferrin as Vice President International Business.

He will oversee NCL's sales efforts outside of its home market of North America, and grow its international footprint by deepening existing travel relationships, and sourcing new business.

Ferrin will also help further integrate international source markets into NCL's business plan.

He joined NCL in Jan 2019 as Vice President & Managing Director UK, Ireland, Israel, South Africa and Middle East, and his new appointment will see him reporting in to Senior VP Sales Todd Hamilton.

Previously, Ferrin was key to the launch of the travel advisor portal and resource centre Norwegian Central.

Let Freedom ring



ROYAL Caribbean International has made its highly anticipated American return, with *Freedom of the Seas* kicking off Independence Day with a cruise from Miami (pictured).

A nearly 16-month journey led to the moment yesterday when *Freedom* began sailing on the first cruise of a summer-long series of three-and four-night getaways to Perfect Day at CocoCay, with

93% of those on board fully vaccinated.

"For a moment as meaningful as Fourth of Jul weekend, it couldn't be more appropriate that *Freedom of the Seas* be the first ship to ring in our return to cruising in the US and delivering the memorable and safe vacations Royal Caribbean is known for," said President & Chief Executive Officer Michael Bayley.

Ultimate Alaska

REGENT Seven Seas Cruises is providing travellers the opportunity to extend their cruise with its latest Ultimate Alaska offer.

Providing a free three-night land program in Vancouver for a limited time on next year's Alaska adventures, a dedicated toolkit for the offer has been created to help travel partners sell, with assets including banners, social media tiles, campaign images, and customisable flyers - **CLICK HERE**.

Advisors are also invited to join an exclusive webinar on Thu with Vice President Australia and New Zealand Lisa Pile and Director of Sales Australia and New Zealand Gillian Seller to explore new horizons and gain access to in-depth information.

To register, **CLICK HERE**.



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Crystal: no sale

CRYSTAL Cruises has distanced itself from a Florida ship broker's claim it wants to sell its river fleet.

The cruise line "emphatically" denied the accuracy of the email sent by the broker to European river lines suggesting its river ships could be "developed for sale", and the assertion it was a "very serious seller".

Crystal also denied it had a contractual relationship with the broker, with the cruise line's legal team issuing it a cease and desist order.

The company's parent, Genting Hong Kong, recently secured new money facilities of US\$700 million, completing the recapitalisation of the group, and amending & extending its debt of US\$2.6 billion, after a period of financial turmoil (*CW* 30 Jun).

The financing is in order to fund the completion of the recently christened *Crystal Endeavor* (*CW* 28 Jun), which will also be the recipient of €313 million of post-delivery funding from existing lenders.

Galapagos return



CELEBRITY Cruises' *Celebrity Flora* returned to the Galapagos Islands on Sun with a seven-night sailing around the archipelago.

The voyage represents the first of three returns the cruise line is making to the Galapagos, with *Flora* (pictured) soon to be followed by *Celebrity Xpedition* and *Celebrity Xploration* on 24 Jul and 18 Sep respectively.

"The Galapagos Islands are a treasure and a destination that is incomparable to any other in the world...we couldn't be

more excited to welcome guests aboard the most special ship in this region for the very special, bucket-list voyage they have been dreaming of for so many months," said Celebrity Cruises President & Chief Executive Officer Lisa Lutoff-Perlo.

Travellers on the cruises will enjoy hiking volcanic landscapes, snorkelling alongside sea turtles in their natural habitat, and partake in twice-daily shore excursions guided by Galapagos National Park certified naturalists.



THREE Queensland fishermen have been forced to swim for their lives as their boat capsized in a crocodile-infested river.

The trio was out on their small reef boat late last month, and before they had even had a chance to drop a line in, they were fighting for their lives in the middle of the Proserpine River, an infamous saltwater crocodile hangout.

After the perhaps aptly named *Shiver* capsized, the men spent about half an hour sitting on the upturned hull in the middle of the river, contemplating how they were going to get to safety.

The decision was soon made for them as *Shiver* began to sink, and the men were forced to enter the water for a nery swim of more than 300 metres to shore, sporting multiple bruises and cuts from knocks sustained from the capsizing.

Fortunately they managed to avoid becoming croc hors d'oeuvres.



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EDITORIAL
Editor in Chief and Publisher – Bruce Piper
Associate Editors – Myles Stedman, Adam Bishop
Contributors – Nicholas O'Donoghue
info@cruiseweekly.com.au
info@cruiseweekly.co.nz

ADVERTISING AND MARKETING
Sean Harrigan, Hoda Alzubaidi
advertising@cruiseweekly.com.au
advertising@cruiseweekly.co.nz

BUSINESS MANAGER
Jenny Piper
accounts@cruiseweekly.com.au

Suite 1, Level 2, 64 Talavera Rd
Macquarie Park NSW 2113 Australia
PO Box 1010 Epping NSW 1710 Australia
Tel: (AU) +61 2 8213 6350 or (NZ) 0800 799 220
Tel: (Int'l) 1300 799 220

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