



Eclipse done for '21

SCENIC Group has suspended its Antarctica, Central America and South America departures for 2021 aboard *Scenic Eclipse*, meaning the ship will be out of action for the remainder of the year.

The company, which recently hosted a keel-laying ceremony for *Eclipse's* follow-up, *Eclipse II* (**CW** 18 May) cancelled its highly anticipated 2021 Kimberley cruise program last month (**CW** 10 May), denying Australians their first chance to board the ship in local waters.

Scenic said it suspended *Eclipse* for the remainder of the year due to the ongoing border closures within South America, with no date announced for review.

Australian travellers will also not be able to board Scenic's scheduled Asia and Europe river cruises and international tours from 01 to 31 Aug.

This decision was made based on the continuing international travel restrictions, emergence of new coronavirus variants, quarantine requirements, attraction closures and extension of lockdowns impacting Australia.

Scenic is offering impacted travellers future travel credit vouchers valid until the end of 2024, which can be redeemed for cash refunds after they expire.

Silversea extends agent pay

SILVERSEA Cruises has extended its commitment to Australian travel advisors, with a continuation of its bonus commission offer, which sees a cash bonus of \$270 paid to travel agencies within 45 days of confirmed new bookings.

The initiative applies to *Silver Muse* and *Silver Shadow* sailings in Australia departing between 17 Dec 2021 and 04 Apr 2022, for bookings made between 20 May and 20 Jun.

Itineraries include Sydney-Auckland cruises and vice versa, with New Zealand also included in the extension.

"Our travel partners are extremely important to Silversea, and we are pleased to offer this benefit to express our appreciation for their hard work and valued partnership," said Director of Sales Australia & New Zealand Steve Richards.

"The bonus commission offers travel partners the opportunity to earn extra income, and know they will be giving their luxury clients an exceptional travel experience," he said.

Richards noted the range of additional benefits available to Silversea's travel partners, such as an "industry-leading commission structure," partnership recognition, expert sales support and digital marketing tools.

MEANWHILE, Silversea has also confirmed its ongoing restart plans, detailing new Alaska and

Iceland sailings which kick off as early as next month.

The cruise line recently announced voyages in the Galapagos Islands and Greece for this month (**CW** 12 Apr), and following the passage of the *U.S. Alaska Tourism Restoration Act* (**CW** 18 May), *Silver Muse* will resume round-trip sailings to Alaska from Seattle starting 29 Jul.

A varied series of 10- and 11-day itineraries will take guests to the Sawyer Glacier, as well as the Mendenhall Glacier, which travellers can visit via helicopter and tour with special glacier boots.

Muse will also call on Ketchikan, Juneau, Wrangell, Sitka and Skagway, from where guests can board a vintage train for an exclusive adventure through the White Pass and Yukon Route, learning about Alaska's gold rush.

Silversea has also launched new all-Icelandic itineraries, which will see *Silver Shadow* circumnavigate the country, returning to Northern Europe with three 10-day voyages from Reykjavik, beginning 30 Jul.

The revised collection will include calls in Grundarfjordur, Isafjordur, Siglufjordur, Akureyri, Husavik, Seydisfjordur, and Heimaey.

All guests and crews will be fully vaccinated against coronavirus before embarking as part of Silversea's multi-layered set of protocols.

Cruise Weekly today

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

Aurora MD UK

AURORA Expeditions has appointed its first Managing Director United Kingdom, Jos Dewing (**pictured**).

With a career spanning more than 20 years in the global travel, cruise and expedition industries, Dewing brings a wealth of experience to Aurora, and a proven track record as a strategic business leader and senior sales and marketing executive.

"I'm honoured and excited to be joining Aurora Expeditions at such a pivotal time of growth as the company moves closer to delivery of its second purpose-built expedition ship, the *Sylvia Earle*, in Oct," said Dewing.

"I've had a lifelong passion for the polar regions and responsible, small-ship expedition voyaging, and my core values align perfectly with those of Aurora".



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CLIA hails Tourism Minister's promise

CRUISE Lines International Association (CLIA) Managing Director Australasia Joel Katz (pictured) has welcomed comments by Minister for Tourism Dan Tehan on Mon that it would be "wonderful to get more cruise ships operating around Australia" (*CW* yesterday).

Speaking at the News Corp Australia Future of Travel forum on Sydney Harbour, Tehan confirmed the current ban on foreign-flagged vessels in Australian waters would be reviewed by the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee within the next couple of weeks.

The Australian Govt's current Human Biosecurity Emergency declaration, which enacts the ban, is set to expire on 17 Jun, with an update expected shortly based on the latest health advice.

Responding to the update, Katz



said Tehan's pledge of a review was a welcome sign of progress, after months of discussions between the cruise industry and the Government.

"The Minister's comments are very encouraging, and we'll continue to push for a clear path to resumption in Australia," Katz enthused.

"With more than 18,000 jobs at stake, it's vital that we keep up our momentum," he said, stressing the importance of

a framework for resumption allowing ships to operate in a domestic bubble, supported by federal, state and territory govts.

Katz also noted strong community support for CLIA's Ready Set Sail campaign (*CW* 12 May) which has so far seen more than 38,000 Australians email their political representatives.

"It's important that we continue to send a clear message in support of cruising's resumption," the CLIA MD added.

A long road ahead

THE cruise industry is set to generate five times less revenue this year than in 2019.

According to data by Statista, the industry is anticipated to create US\$6.6 billion in revenue, with confidence in cruise lines plummeting thanks to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Two years ago, the cruise industry generated US\$27.4 billion in revenue, the data revealed, but after the pandemic struck, revenues plummeted by 88% in a year to US\$3.3 billion last year.

The data indicates it will take until 2024 for cruise line revenues to exceed 2019 figures.

The massive drop in revenue is driven by a more than two-thirds (76%) decrease in passengers to 6.7 million, down from almost 29 million before the pandemic.

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A RECYCLED Ocean Plastic Resort is planned for Australia's Cocos Keeling Islands.

Architecture firm Margot Krasojevic Architects has come up with an experimental solution to ocean pollution, building a luxury resort island made from plastic rubbish.

The British architecture firm said the island resort could be open to guests as early as 2025, and visitors would stay in "canopied" rooms and camping land, with showers using filtered and distilled seawater.

The most remarkable design aspect of the innovative island would be its ability to expand by itself, using pollution - a massive problem in the Indian Ocean.

The island would initially be built using "tension leg structures", often used on oil rigs, and three walkways.

50 Degrees deposit

50 DEGREES North's 2022/2023 Northern Lights Small Group Tour series, including its eight-day Escorted Northern Lights tour to Norway & Finland can currently be booked with only a \$100 booking deposit.

The tour takes travellers to experience the Aurora highlights in some of Scandinavia and the Nordics' most magical destinations, and includes a two-night cruise from Tromso to Kirkenes.

MSC's double delight

SALES have opened for MSC Cruises' *MSC World Europa*, the first World-class ship on the market.

World Europa, which MSC said is its "most innovative and environmentally friendly ship to date", will aim to bring together technology and industry-first design features, including its unique Y-shape.

The ship will offer a variety of distinctive experiences on board, with a mix of "never-before-seen concepts" and "creative areas unlike anything at sea".

Currently under construction at the Chantiers de l'Atlantique shipyard in Saint-Nazaire, MSC Cruises' Executive Chairman Pierfrancesco Vago said *World Europa* and the entire World Class hopes to redefine the cruise experience.

"From the future-proof on board technologies that this completely new platform introduces for the first time all the way to its ground-breaking marine and interior design features...*World Europa* marks the beginning of a new era for cruising," he said.

"At MSC Cruises innovation will and has always been at the heart of our business, driving how with each new class of ships we reimagine the guest experience, the operations as well as every single aspect of the technology that brings it all together...we have a strong, clear vision for the future and we combine that with our own timeless style.

"*World Europa* embodies this perfectly - bringing together future-proof technologies,

globally inspired urban design and our signature European flair to give our guests a next-level cruise experience."

MEANWHILE, MSC has obtained final clearance to build and operate a new terminal at the Port of Barcelona.

Set to enter service in 2024, the €33 million terminal will allow MSC to increase homeporting operations in Barcelona, with the cruise line partnering with Catalan architect Ricardo Bofill on the build.

With construction work set to start shortly, the multi-year concession will see MSC operate and manage the terminal for a 31-year period.

The new facility will feature shore power facilities, and will be ready for LNG bunkering operations, allowing MSC to deploy more next-gen ships in Barcelona, such as *World Europa*. Vago weighed in on Barcelona's importance to MSC.

"Perhaps most importantly, the new terminal will allow us to operate expanded homeport operations, resulting in added direct and indirect economic benefit for the city and the overall region," he said.

"This will come from higher spend locally by our international guests either flying into or out of Barcelona Airport and likely to spend additional days in the city and its hotels together with their travelling parties."

MSC also recently announced it will restart Baltic Sea sailings next month from Germany, with a range of brand new itineraries (**CW** 20 May).



CLIA UPDATE

with Joel Katz
MD, CLIA Australasia

Welcome signs of progress

TOURISM Minister Dan Tehan's comments that Australia's cruise suspension could be reviewed in coming weeks (**CW** yesterday) is a welcome sign of progress after months of discussions between the cruise industry and the Aus Govt.

His statement that it would be "wonderful to get more cruise ships operating around Australia" shows the government is now more willing to acknowledge the importance of cruising and that it is increasingly aware of the impact the cruise suspension is having on Australian jobs.

This comes after a concerted campaign by CLIA and our industry's supporters to make MPs aware of the size and significance of the Australian cruise community.

So far, almost 40,000 messages have been sent to State and Federal MPs as part of our Ready Set Sail campaign, and the numbers continue to grow.

But there's still much to overcome - our industry needs a clear framework for resumption, not just from the federal government but also supported by the states.

While international borders remain closed, we need an opportunity to bring ships safely into an Australian bubble so we can begin domestic operations for Australian residents and help rebuild economic opportunities.

