



Cruise Weekly today

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

ACA welcomes cruise

THE Australian Cruise Association (ACA) has welcomed the industry's local restart, as the first internationally flagged ship arrived back in the country yesterday (see **main story**).

"After a two-year pause in cruising, we are looking forward to seeing international cruise ships arrive back into Australia signalling a return to economic growth for this important sector of the tourism industry" said Chief Executive Officer Jill Abel.

"We have worked closely with our industry partners to hold extensive discussions with federal government".

P&O returns to Sweet Home Sydney

CARNIVAL Corporation President Australia Marguerite Fitzgerald has said the phones at P&O Cruises' local call centres have been "overwhelmed", as the line was welcomed home in Sydney yesterday after a two-year absence (**CW** 11 Apr).

Pacific Explorer returned to Sydney to a stunning welcome, after the Human Biosecurity Emergency Period officially expired on Sun.

A flotilla of private ships welcomed *Explorer* back to Aussie waters, including a specially chartered vessel by P&O.

Explorer became the first cruise ship to return to the country since 2020, passing through Sydney Heads at about 9.30am, before sailing into Circular Quay around 10:30am.

Her arrival marked a 28-day voyage from Europe, where she had been paused for much of the



past two years waiting to come home to Australia.

"I think what's really important about today is that it's a real signal that this isn't a false start... this is really the cruise industry resuming," Fitzgerald told **CW**.

"We continue to expect to see guests coming back."

Fitzgerald added the entire country is now engaging P&O

about individual restarts.

"Even though it's the three eastern states who announced the protocols, all the states are in conversation with us about what it would look like to resume cruising," she said.

Pictured: Fitzgerald celebrates the return of *Explorer*, as the vessel is welcomed in with a ceremonial water cannon salute.

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THERE were helicopters, boats, tugboats with water cannons and long-range lenses a-plenty to capture the arrival of P&O Australia's *Pacific Explorer* into Sydney yesterday (see page 1).

As well as the breathless non-stop coverage on 7, the Australian Cruise Association (ACA) provided another unique perspective, in the form of an amazing time-lapse view from the vessel's bridge.

Explorer was brought into dock by marine pilot Lindsay Cavanagh on behalf of ACA member, the NSW Port Authority.

Cavanagh captured the special moment for posterity as *Explorer* rounded the Heads, passing by all the familiar landmarks, before docking at the Overseas Passenger Terminal.

Check out the bridge-eye view at cruiseweekly.com.au.

Ponant pumped for restart



PONANT President Herve Gastinel travelled to Sydney from the cruise line's headquarters in Marseille last week to meet with key industry partners, in the lead-up to its highly anticipated Kimberley restart (**CW** 13 Apr), which is now less than 10 days away.

The cruise line's Asia-Pacific Chair Sarina Bratton said "our two small expedition ships, *Le Laperouse* and *Le Soleal* have been in Noumea for two years waiting to return to their operating areas of Australia and NZ and are now set to commence operation".

Le Laperouse will be the first ship to restart, leading the international cruise ship recommencement with her first local post-pandemic commercial voyage departing Darwin on 28 Apr, followed a month later by *Le Soleal*.

That means there will be two Ponant ships operating in the Top End before the 31 May restart of



P&O's cruising between Sydney and Brisbane (see page 1).

"Over the course of the season, Ponant alone will take around 4,000 Australians on expeditions to explore the wonders of our North West wilderness," Bratton said, with the cruise line last week opening up last-minute availability on two new *Le Soleal* departures from Darwin and Broome in May and Nov - for more details **CLICK HERE**.

Gastinel is pictured above with Bratton during an event at the Royal Sydney Yacht Squadron, while inset, he waves beneath the Ponant flags on the shores of Sydney Harbour to confirm his irrepressible excitement.

AQV names CCO

AMERICAN Queen Voyages (AQV) has appointed Isis Ruiz as its new Chief Commercial Officer, with Ruiz joining the Hornblower Group division after more than 20 years of cruise sector experience - most recently as Norwegian Cruise Line Chief Marketing Officer.

Hornblower Group recently acquired Journey Beyond.

Celestyal is back!

CELESTYAL Cruises recommenced cruises yesterday, with its first sailing departing Athens.

"The unwavering dedication and unified teamwork of the Celestyal team, both shoreside and onboard, are merging with our new health and safety guidelines and our strong commitment to our roots, in order to introduce our surprising experiences," the cruise line said.

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