



Cruise Weekly today

CRUISE Weekly today features four pages of all the latest cruise industry news, plus a full page from **Norwegian Cruise Line**.

Symphony sets sail

A&K Travel Group is celebrating the debut of its second Crystal Cruises ship, with *Crystal Symphony* emerging from her extensive makeover last week for an Adriatic shakedown ahead of her maiden commercial voyage which departs from Athens tomorrow.

Symphony and fleet-mate *Crystal Serenity* have undergone more than €278 million in upgrades since A&K acquired the vessels and the Crystal brand last year.

Last month (**CW** 31 Jul), A&K CEO Cristina Levis announced four newbuilds for the brand.

Aurora to expand through Vantage

EXCLUSIVE

AURORA Expeditions' new Vantage Explorations brand, recently acquired by the cruise line's offshoot company Pacific Travel Partners (**CW** 29 Aug), will offer a different range of voyages in new destinations, potentially including Australia, Chief Marketing Officer Hayley Peacock-Gower (**pictured**) has confirmed to **Cruise Weekly**.

The cruise line recently confirmed its third currently unnamed ship is expected to be delivered in Oct 2025, and with her, Aurora is looking at cruising voyages in its home market of Australia, as well as the Mediterranean, Northern Europe, the Caribbean, and the Baltic.

"We're currently looking at what the offering will look like and where the ship's going to go," Peacock-Gower said.

Aurora also recently hinted at the introduction of river and land



product through its new Vantage brand, although Peacock-Gower maintained the cruise line's plans are still very much a "work in progress".

"We're looking at what's available and what opportunities there might be for that - third-party operators or an acquisition," she added.

"We're deciding whether we're going to operate the

trips ourselves, or if we're going to partner with third-party operators - some of these could be operators Vantage has partnered with in the past."

However, Peacock-Gower said amidst the excitement of the opportunities available to Aurora, the cruise line's ultimate goal is to present a full product offering to Vantage customers, so they can recoup their losses from the prior operation's collapse (**CW** 03 Jul) through the utilisation of their travel credits.

"We are moving as quickly as possible to get the operations up and running so that we can look after Vantage customers who have been impacted by the demise," she added.

The court settlement which handed Vantage to Aurora for US\$2 million stipulates that the credit offered to the customers of the defunct company should be available for five years.

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Cruise plan for a sustainable future

EXCLUSIVE

THE local cruise industry needs to start planning for the next 10 years now, and doing so sustainably, Australian Cruise Association (ACA) Chief Executive Officer Jill Abel has said.

Speaking exclusively to **CW** ahead of today's ACA annual conference in Wollongong, Abel said the Australian cruise industry needs to consider what is both environmentally and economically sustainable in order to build off what is expected to be the biggest season ever Down Under later this year.

"Looking at what infrastructure we need to actually facilitate that growth, and how that infrastructure is built and set up to meet those sustainable needs," she said.

Addressing the serendipity of the conference's location and Port Kembla's push to accept more cruise calls, Abel insisted the Government of New South Wales needs to end the delay over a third passenger terminal which can service Sydney.

"This government needs



to commit to a location and build a modern, purpose-built turnaround facility," she affirmed.

"We've been pushing for a third terminal, the demand is there, and Port Kembla is a consideration from our perspective.

"The Port Authority (of NSW) have said it's in the mix for discussion as well."

The ACA's 25th annual conference will also focus on discussing future fuel options, particularly what future energy sources may look like, and how

they may be accessed.

Future fuel makes up part of ACA's goal to ensure sustainability commitments on board ships are also being matched on shore.

"Cruise has been very vocal about how they're being sustainable on board the ships, and we need to match some of that on shore," Abel insisted.

Pictured are ACA's Natalie Godward from NSW Ports Authority, Abel, and Inchcape Shipping's Karlie Cavanagh - more from the ACA conference on **page three** of today's **CW**.

Azamara showcases new agent group deal

AZAMARA Cruises has unveiled a new group offer which includes a free "tour conductor credit" for every 12 passengers booked.

Chief Sales Officer, Michelle Lardizabal noted that group

travel is an important part of business for many of Azamara's travel agent partners.

"Our goal is to provide our partners with the best support," she said, with the line's group concierge team also expanding.

Sierra Leone Mercy

HOSPITAL aid vessel *Global Mercy* will spend the next 10 months in Freetown, Sierra Leone as part of an ongoing collaboration with the country's government, offering free surgeries and training.

Disney sneak peek

DISNEY Cruise Line will next week reveal "never before released details" of its new *Disney Treasure* under construction in Germany, via a video to be released on the Disney Parks Blog on 05 Sep.



A Conversation with Danielle Galloway

of Travel Associates

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ACA 'Gongs in 25th annual conference

Thursday 31st August 2023

THE Australian Cruise Association (ACA) kicked off its 25th annual Conference in Wollongong yesterday, with spirits high ahead of a bumper upcoming season, and the lifting of New South Wales' COVID protocols. With Wollongong the setting for this year's Conference, the ACA is backing Port Kembla as a strong option for a third cruise port to service Sydney and NSW, following the cancellation of the Yarra Bay proposal earlier this year (*CW* 09 Jun).

The conference is appropriately titled "Full Steam Ahead", with a range of keynote presentations and panel discussions, which will begin today, to reflect the theme.

The exciting line-up of speakers making up the agenda include Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA) Australasia Chair Ben Angell from Norwegian Cruise Line; Princess Cruises Senior Vice President Stuart Allison; Royal Caribbean International Vice President & Managing Director Gavin Smith; and Ponant Director of Expeditions & Destination Development, Mick Fogg.

Yesterday also saw conference guests enjoy a deep dive into the local region, including a tour of the bustling port of Port Kembla, a trip to Shellharbour Airport to experience aviation history, and a walking tour of Wollongong's Blue Mile Pathway.



WOLLONGONG Mayor Gordon Bradbery and Member for Wollongong Paul Scully are welcomed into the cruising family by Port Authority of New South Wales Chief Executive Officer Philip Holliday and ACA Chief Executive Officer Jil Abel.



CLIA Managing Director Joel Katz, TasPorts Senior Commercial Manager Cruise Kristy Little, Port Authority of New South Wales Cruise Development Manager Natalie Godward, and Tourism NT Development Officer Samantha Waldron.



THE trio of excellence representing the Brisbane cruise industry.



CLIA Communications Director Jon Murrie, Carnival Corporation Chief Strategy & External Affairs Officer Therese Lloyd, and CLIA MD Joel Katz & Director of Government Affairs Hugh Cavill.



THREE living legends of cruise: Ted Blamey, Jacqui Lloyd, and Stuart Allison.



THE ACA's Karlie Cavanagh and Jill Abel welcome conferencers to the 'Gong'.





WE KNOW cruise lines are all focused on eventually moving away from fossil fuels, but things got a little more direct in Palma de Mallorca this week when P&O Cruises UK's *Britannia* actually smashed into an oil tanker.

The unfortunate incident occurred during unexpectedly fierce winds, which saw the ship break free from its moorings prior to the collision.

Unfortunately for the operator, the collision smashed one of *Britannia's* lifeboats which in turn reduced the permitted carrying capacity of the vessel.

A spokesperson for P&O UK said "a limited number of guests and crew on board have been advised they will be leaving the ship and will be returned to Southampton (or their starting point) by flight and transfer" with a pro-rata refund and a 20% future credit.

Coral East Indies 2024



CORAL Expeditions is expanding its East Indies itineraries with a number of new voyages next year, including a circumnavigation of Sumatra, a voyage in Borneo, and a Sulawesi expedition.

Commencing in early Nov 2024 on board Coral's *Coral Geographer*, the first voyage will embark from Manila on a 16-night Equatorial Adventure Across North Borneo, taking guests on an immersive exploration of the destinations' rich traditions.

There will also be a unique 18-night adventure on the inaugural Circumnavigation of Sumatra departing from Singapore, where guests will explore hard-to-reach small

fringe islands, follow historical trading routes, and the trails of early explorers.

The third of these newly released voyages will depart from Singapore, and travel across the Christmas and New Year period over 16 nights to Makassar.

The final voyage in the series will commence in early 2025 with a 14-night expedition In the Wake of the Makassans, from Sulawesi to Darwin.

Guests will enjoy an enriching journey through the Flores and Savu seas, exploring lesser-visited islands, home to traditional seafaring traditions and rich cultural practices.

CLICK HERE for more info including live availability.

On location in Wollongong

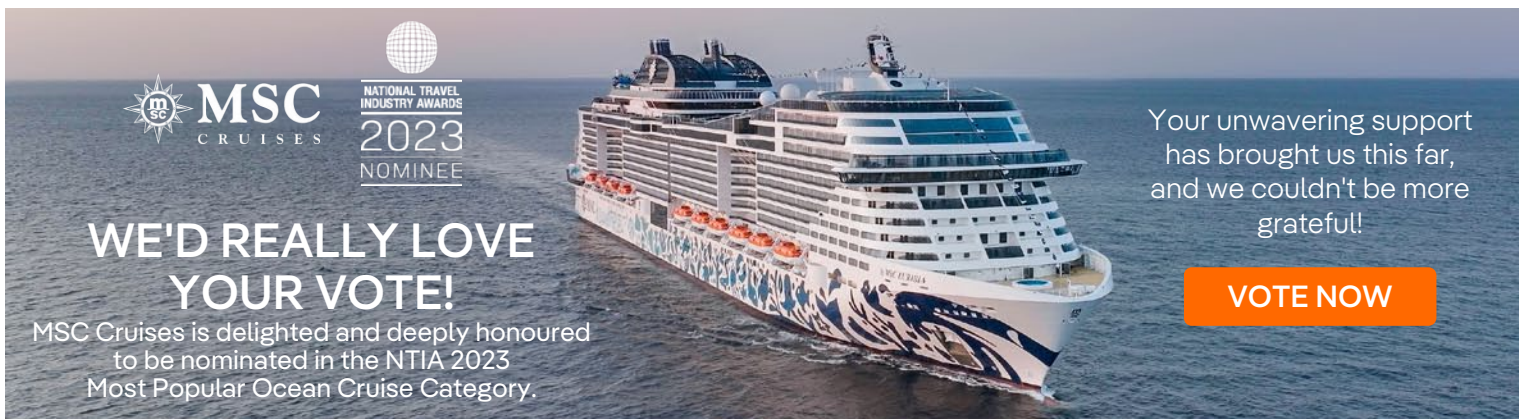
Today's issue of *Cruise Weekly* is coming to you courtesy of the Australian Cruise Association, which is hosting its 25th annual conference this week.


THE Australian Cruise Association (ACA) is hosting its highly anticipated annual conference in Wollongong.


Attendees arrived yesterday at the Novotel Wollongong Northbeach, and were greeted later in the evening with welcome drinks at the hotel's North Bar (see **page three**).

The conference's program begins in earnest today with a packed agenda of high profile presenters from across cruise lines, destinations, suppliers and industry stakeholders.

A "surf's up" themed party tonight at Steamers Bar & Grill will see delegates let their hair down, while tomorrow morning ACA will host its annual general meeting.







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