



Cruise Weekly today

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

A heli of a time

SCENIC Luxury Cruises & Tours has announced its first helicopter excursion aboard *Scenic Eclipse*, to view the iconic emperor penguin colony at Antarctica's Snow Hill Island.

Created by *Eclipse's* Captain Radomir Novosel and the specialist Polar Discovery Team, the excursion was first made available on the 13-day Antarctica in Depth voyage.

Guests landed on the sea ice near Snow Hill Island, located in the Weddell Sea, using *Eclipse's* two helicopters.

They had the opportunity to view the colony, which is home to over 4,000 breeding pairs of emperor penguins.

Victoria urged to protect cruise sector

THE Victorian tourism sector is urging the state government to act swiftly to support Melbourne's cruise industry, as the city is set to farewell two lines in the coming seasons.

Two Carnival Corporation brands, Cunard Line and Princess Cruises, will no longer sail from Melbourne from the 2025-26 cruise season, in what the Tourism & Transport Forum (TTF) is describing as a "major blow" to the industry.

Princess told **Cruise Weekly** it will be redeploying its Melbourne capacity to other departure points, such as Sydney and Brisbane, from late 2025.

The line will continue to visit Melbourne on cruises from these two cities, "as Victoria remains an important destination".

The move comes after Cunard earlier this month announced it will leave Australian shores



altogether following its 2024/25 season (**CW** 06 Nov).

The group's Chief Exec Margy Osmond (**pictured**) expressed her "deep disappointment" at the move, and insisted the government urgently collaborate with Victoria's cruise lines to secure the future of the sector in the state.

"The loss of Princess Cruises and Cunard from Victoria's cruise sector is a major blow to the state's tourism industry," she said.

"These brands have been instrumental in attracting visitors

and generating economic benefits for the state.

"We must address cruise ship operators concerns and ensure they have the support needed to prevent further erosion of the cruise industry."

Osmond said the value of cruising "cannot be underestimated", having contributed nearly \$380 million to Victoria's economy last season.

"Melbourne has already lost the Spirit of Tasmania to Geelong, diverting hundreds of thousands of tourists away from Melbourne, and as result we don't want to lose any other operators."

"The State Government must work with industry to ensure tourism operators like Carnival Australia can have a continued presence in Victoria and help prevent further decisions that could reduce tourism investment." *MS*

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State cruise tax proposed in Mexico

CRUISES visiting some of Mexico's busiest cruise ports may have to pay a tax of USD\$5 per person from the beginning of 2025, local media is reporting.

The cruise ship tax has been proposed by the state of Quintana Roo, which wants to use the money it would generate to fund infrastructure improvements, as well as for disaster relief.

Quintana Roo is home to two of the busiest cruise ports in Mexico, Cozumel and Costa Maya, which together welcome more than four million cruise passengers to Mexico every year.

The tax is part of Quintana Roo's 2024 fiscal budget, and would be payable at the time the booking is made, it has been reported.

Travel agents key for Norwegian Viva

NORWEGIAN Cruise Line (NCL) this morning formally named its new *Norwegian Viva*, with Chief Executive Officer David Herrera and Norwegian Cruise Line Holdings Chief Executive Officer Harry Sommer both paying tribute to the travel advisors who sell the product.

The event was live streamed from PortMiami, with Sommer **(pictured)** saying "I can't emphasise enough the special partnership we have with the trade community, our travel agency friends who are critical to our success, particularly as we continue to grow our fleet".

He noted 2023 was a landmark for the company as the first year in which it will debut new vessels for all three brands: *Viva*, Oceania Cruises' *Oceania Vista* and Regent Seven Seas Cruises' soon-to-debut *Seven Seas Grandeur*.

Reminding guests at the naming



ceremony of his former life as founder of a high-end cruise-only travel agency, Sommer said "I personally know the value that the trade community brings".

"I'll use the vast resources of this company to make sure that our partners are set up for success...simply put, we will win together," he said.

Norwegian Viva was christened by the ship's new godfather, five-time Latin Grammy-award winning singer, songwriter and performer Luis Fonsi, who noted

the ship will operate both from his adopted home in Miami and the port of San Juan in Puerto Rico, where he was born.

The second ship in Norwegian's Prima class, *Viva* includes the Indulge Food Hall with 11 unique eateries, the "fastest slides at sea", Norwegian's industry-exclusive sustainable cocktail bar The Metropolitan, and of course the three-level Viva Speedway go-kart racetrack.

Sommer said *Viva* continues Norwegian's promise to provide "the best premium and luxury experiences...it will drive every decision we make".

Earlier today the company also unveiled a section of its Pearl of Miami terminal marking 2023 as the 57-year anniversary of Knut Kloster establishing NCL and "essentially founding the modern cruise industry in this location that we're sitting today". *BP*



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Cunard's "biggest Aussie season yet"

CUNARD Line has arrived in Fremantle (pictured) for its "biggest celebration of Australia yet", as *Queen Elizabeth* begins her home port season.

Local brand partnerships, curated event voyages, and a host of renowned guest speakers will highlight Cunard's local season.

Almost 60 port calls are scheduled across the cruise line's three ships, *Queen Elizabeth*, flagship *Queen Mary 2*, and *Queen Victoria*.

The season will see Cunard partner with British actor Tim Marriott, who stars in the one-man, award-winning theatre performance *Jack's Ashes*.

Marriott will perform the popular sell-out show during a seven-night Tasmania sailing on *Queen Elizabeth* in Jan.

Other highlights will include talks from former Australian cricket captain Kim Hughes,



retired Army officer Peter Cosgrove, and Australian newsreader Tracey Spicer.

Meanwhile, the sold-out Great Australian Culinary Voyage (CW 21 Jul) will cruise in Jan, and the inaugural Sporting Greats (CW 16 Aug) and Wellness Voyage will depart in Feb.

President Katie McAlister expressed her enthusiasm for the 2023/2024 Australia season.

"We are excited to welcome guests aboard our elegant three Queens as they embark on a voyage filled with luxury, cultural enrichment, and unforgettable moments," she said. MS

The Star is rising

PRE-REGISTRATIONS

are open for Murray River Paddlesteamers' *Australian Star* (CW 06 Oct), which is slated to be the country's first "five-star river ship".

Australian Star is set to launch in less than 18 months, in Apr 2025, with Murray River Paddlesteamers currently inviting pre-registration for priority status to be among the first passengers to sail aboard the 38-guest *Australian Star*.

Murray River Paddlesteamers is also offering special reduced deposits of just \$150 per person, as well as 10% commission to travel advisors.

Fares will be released in Feb, when bookings for the ship officially open.

Australian Star is being built in a specially designed shed in Mildura, beside the river she will cruise.

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THE world's first electric flying passenger ship (pictured) could "revolutionise how we travel on water", manufacturer Candela believes.

The 12-metre, 30-passenger ship will enter Stockholm's public transport network next year, slashing a 55-minute commute by half an hour.

The ship has completed test flights, and will fly at up to 25 knots (46km/h), with a range of almost 100 kilometres.

The vessel "flies" using hydrofoils, which can adapt to waves, wind, and water currents, reducing the chances of seasickness.



Viking invades Antarctica

VIKING has returned to Antarctica for its third season, with *Viking Octantis* and her identical sister ship *Viking Polaris* again arriving in the continent.

Both ships will spend the season in Antarctica before returning to North America's Great Lakes for voyages throughout the spring, summer, and early autumn.

Viking has also opened its 2025-26 Antarctica season for bookings to meet strong demand for voyages, with a new 87-day expedition to the continent from the Arctic announced.

The cruise will sail from Nuuk to Ushuaia, departing in Sep 2025, exploring the natural beauty of the High Arctic Tundra, before travelling down the east coast of North and South America,

calling on ports in the Caribbean, Peru, and exploring the Chilean glaciers, before the cruise continues to Antarctica.

"As we welcome guests back for a third season in Antarctica, we are pleased to introduce even more opportunities for the curious traveller to experience this phenomenal region in Viking comfort," Chairman Torstein Hagen said.

"Our guests are able to explore some of the most pristine destinations on Earth in the most responsible way possible while also participating in meaningful scientific discoveries."

The arrival of Viking's expedition ships in Antarctica also marks the completion of two inaugural Longitudinal World Cruises. *MS*



CLIA UPDATE

with Joel Katz
MD, CLIA Australasia

Being heard in Canberra

THIS summer's cruise season is already shaping up to be one of Australia's best, bringing 18% more port days than 2019-20.

Although we have a lot to be optimistic about, Australia's cruise economy still faces hurdles. CLIA has been in Canberra this week, joining with Ports Australia, the Australian Cruise Association, and other industry stakeholders to ensure our \$5.6 billion-a-year contribution to the national economy is valued and understood.

At an event at Parliament House on Mon, we highlighted Australia's increasing operating costs for cruise lines, which include some of the world's highest fees, taxes and port charges.

There are also regulatory complexities, capacity constraints and bottlenecks around our border processes that impact cruise operations.

Cruise is unique in that it spans both the maritime and tourism sectors.

Though it is regulated by the Department of Infrastructure, its impacts are profoundly felt across the wider tourism sector.

For this reason, it is vital that we have a whole-of-government approach to fostering cruise tourism, with close industry consultation.



Lindblad + Hyatt

LINDBLAD Expeditions' collaboration with World of Hyatt will come to an end on 31 Dec, the cruise line has confirmed to **CW**.

The program gave World of Hyatt members the ability to earn and redeem points and receive perks on select Lindblad voyages.

The cruise line will honour all existing paid reservations through the program.

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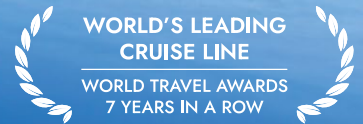
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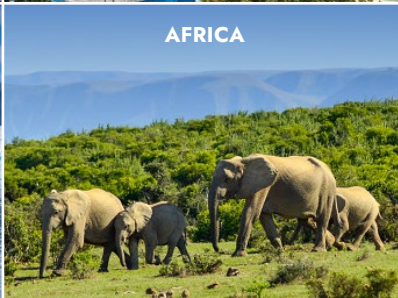
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