



### Cruise Weekly today

**CRUISE Weekly** today features two pages of all the latest cruise industry news.

### New RCI APAC head

**CHAD** Grospe has been appointed Royal Caribbean International's new VP & MD Asia-Pacific, replacing Angie Stephen in the role (**CW** breaking news yesterday).

Grospe most recently led Royal Caribbean's international marketing team, and will now step up to lead the cruise line's team in Asia, as Stephen steps into the Senior Vice President of International role.

The appointment of Grospe will not affect Gavin Smith's role as Vice President & Managing Director Australia.

"I'm thrilled to join and lead the team in Asia-Pacific," Grospe said.

## Coastal Trading Act exemption extended

**THE** Australian Government has continued an extension for cruise ships under the *Coastal Trading Act* until 31 Dec 2026, maintaining an existing arrangement allowing foreign-flagged vessels to carry passengers between local ports (**CW** breaking news).

The extension, which was set to expire at the end of the year, provides clarity for cruise lines and the Australian tourism industry on the operations of ships for the next two years.

There had been no decision made on the extension as recently as Jun (**CW** 14 Jun), when **CW** learned a review into the Act by Minister for Transport Catherine King had yet to begin.

The extension was welcomed by Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA), which had been advocating strongly regarding the Act's extension.

"The Australian Government has continued an exemption to the *Coastal Trading Act*, which maintains existing arrangements and means eligible cruise lines can continue to operate between Australian ports.

"The exemption is an important regulatory provision in Australia and supports cruise operations worth more than \$5.6 billion a year to communities around the coast," the CLIA statement said.

"Cruise ships made almost 1,400 port calls around Australia in 2022-23, creating an economic impact that supports more than 18,000 Australian jobs."

This year's extension announcement has fortuitously come earlier than 2023's, when the industry was kept waiting until the 11th hour (**CW** 14 Dec), with King delaying a decision until just weeks before its expiration.

The anticlimactic announcement

also saw the exemption only granted for an extra 12 months, as opposed to the prior five-year waiver issued in 2018, and this year's two-year extension.

The next item on the Government's docket is the upcoming wholesale review of the *Coastal Trading Act*, with a view to creating longer-term regulatory certainty for the cruise industry in Australia.

Regulatory uncertainty has caused significant problems for the local sector, particularly in the wake of the closure of P&O Cruises Australia (**CW** 04 Jun).

Carnival Cruise Line President Christine Duffy told **CW** regulatory challenges in Australia were hampering the company's ability to do business Down Under, which played a part in the decision to retire the P&O brand.

"More regulation creates more risk and more cost," she said. *MS*

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**PRINCESS** Cruises has just introduced its next level of connectivity at sea, and has found a novel way to demonstrate its power.

The cruise line will host the first-ever land/sea custom UGC competition to demonstrate, leveraging 'Princess Cruises Nautical Quest, a custom Minecraft world'.

The match-up will feature 32 of the world's most popular UGC players, with eight of the gamers - Shubble, Krinios, Fruitberries, vGumiho, Sneegsnag, JimmyHere, Smajor, and Hannahxxrose - competing aboard *Enchanted Princess* in the Caribbean against 24 others who will play from home, as millions of fans tune in to watch online.

It is hoped the online gaming competition will demonstrate the speed of Princess' new internet, while also capturing the hearts of Gen Z.

## Rolling out the Matt



**A SELECT** number of media joined an intimate dinner at Aria in Sydney last night, hosted by Cunard Line.

Diners enjoyed a sneak peak at Matt Moran's new menu, which is set to be served on board *Queen Elizabeth* next year, as part of Cunard's 'Great Australian Culinary Voyage' (**CW** 14 Dec).

Moran joined diners for the night, taking them through a number of his creations for the upcoming Australian Culinary

Voyage, including dry aged marentina duck, Gundagai lamb loin, crab with cucumber, and coral trout with tomato.

Next year's Culinary Voyage will be the third, with Moran to be joined by Norrie Bero, Darren Purchase, Julie Goodwin, and Katie Spain (**CW** 27 Feb). **MS Pictured** are Cunard Line Public Relations & Partnerships Lead Julian Rosenberg and Commercial Director Katrina McAlpine with Matt Moran.

## Riverside in town

**AUSTRALIANS** will soon have a new river cruise brand to consider for their European holiday, with Riverside Luxury Cruises heralding its arrival on the local market.

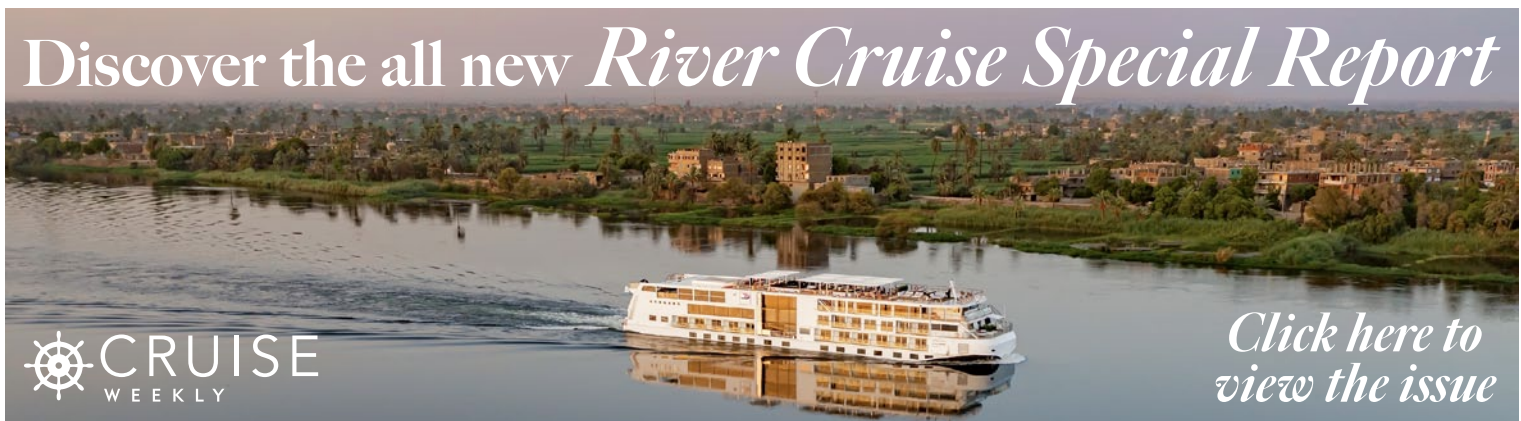
The brand is an offshoot of Europe's Seaside Hotels chain, which comprises 10 properties in Germany, Spain, the Canary Islands, and the Maldives.

Riverside currently sails with three ships - *Ravel*, *Debussy*, and *Mozart* - each of which feature only suite-class accommodations along with a 2:1 guest-to-crew ratio and a personal butler for each suite.

The ships themselves may be familiar to some as being formerly owned by Crystal Cruises under its now-defunct Genting Hong Kong ownership.

At 11 metres wide and catering to 110 guests, *Riverside Ravel* and *Riverside Debussy* can be found on the Rhine, Main, Moselle and Danube rivers.

At 23m wide and catering to 162 guests, the larger *Riverside Mozart* claims to be the widest river ship in Europe.



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