



Cruise Weekly today

Cruise Weekly today features three pages of all the latest cruise industry news, plus full pages from:

- Disney Cruise Line
- Royal Caribbean

No cruise strategy for NSW..yet

EXCLUSIVE

ALTHOUGH yesterday's New South Wales Visitor Economy Strategy review made no mention of cruise, senior leaders in the sector are hopeful the state has not lost sight of the impact the industry makes.

Millions of extra airline seats, tens of thousands of hotel rooms, and a focus on "experience-led" tourism were called out by Govt of NSW, as it aims to "transform" the state's visitor economy into a "\$91 billion powerhouse".

Although the industry was not called out in the Visitor Economy Strategy, senior leaders around the sector remain optimistic, with the Australian Cruise Association (ACA) anticipating the release of a finalised, fuller master plan.

This would see the inclusion of the cruise industry, which as per the state government's statistics, contributes \$2.75 billion to the

local economy.

"ACA has been involved in the consulting process which will inform the final strategy," Chief Executive Officer Jill Abel said.

"We look forward to seeing the NSW Visitor Strategy when it is completed...we applaud the commitment by Destination NSW to cruise tourism, and look forward to continuing our work with them to nurture the cruise sector in the state."

NSW Tourism Association Chief Executive Officer Natalie Godward, who recently concluded a five-year tenure with the ACA herself, admitted her surprise the cruise sector received no mention yesterday.

Godward, who was broadly supportive of the Strategy, was surprised at cruise's omission.

"I was surprised to see it omitted, because they took such effort and time to look at all

facets of the industry and speak to stakeholders and get involved," she told **CW**.

"Cruise disperses high volumes of visitors to areas across NSW they may not have otherwise gone to.

"We know in regional ports, return visitation is really high after they've been there for the first time."

NSW is coming under increasing pressure from other states around Australia to reinforce its cruise industry, with South Australia recently announcing the formation of a 'cruise attraction working group' (**CW** 06 Sep).

Western Australia also has its own cruise strategy, as the state also endeavours to expand border services at the Port of Broome (**CW** 08 Mar).

NSW also recently delayed its shore power project at White Bay by two years (**CW** 30 Sep). **MS**

Disney virtual cruise

WHAT can you do on a Disney Cruise Line virtual voyage? Turns out quite a lot.

For more information on Disney's Magic Ahoy virtual cruise, head to **page 4**.

Dial it up with RCI

DIAL up the weekend with Royal Caribbean (RCI).

The cruise line is taking weekend getaways to the next level, with two-to-four-night short-stay sailings from Brisbane and Sydney from \$459 per person - see **page 5**.

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Scenic introduces 2026 Euro season

SCENIC Luxury Cruises & Tours has announced the launch of early access for its 2026 Europe river cruises.

The cruise line's extended 2026 season introduces new departures in Feb and Mar, as well as additional sailings in Nov and Dec.

These journeys will enable guests to enjoy fewer crowds, greater value, and the seasonal magic of Europe.

Scenic is also expanding its itineraries, integrating its river cruises with city extensions and land journeys.

One of Scenic's new extensions for 2026 is a three-day London add-on, introduced in recognition of the popularity of the city among Australian travellers.

The extension is available with the 15-day 'Jewels of Europe' cruise and the 11-day 'Normandy and Gems of the Seine' voyage.



There is also a new five-day city extension, which will highlight Bavaria's best, including Munich, Schwangau, Nuremberg, and Regensburg, with a visit to the iconic Neuschwanstein Castle.

Also returning is Scenic's eight-day river cruise to discover the 'Charming Castles & Vineyards of the Rhine & Moselle'.

The season will treat guests

to significant interior design enhancements across Scenic's ships, as part of a multi-year investment in the cruise line's river fleet.

This includes new layouts, ultra-modern furnishings, and innovative day-to-night transformations in the lounge and specialty dining areas - **CLICK HERE** for more. *MS*

Azamara new Reza

AZAMARA has introduced Reza, a new enhanced booking experience, designed to streamline and improve the booking experience for agents.

The new global reservations system incorporates a range of features aimed at enhancing efficiency and user experience, drawing from direct feedback from travel advisors.

Key features include the ability to send payment links to clients, expedited commission payments via a "Pay in Full" option, and advisor recognition at the booking level.

Additional tools facilitate group bookings, automate payment reminders, and allow for easy duplication of reservations for clients travelling together.

Advisors can access the new system **HERE**.



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THE wreck of a French steamship, which sunk in the 19th century, has been discovered off the coast of New England.

Le Lyonnais, which was a marvel for its time, was found about 300 kilometres off the coast of Massachusetts in late Aug, following years of work to locate it.

The next steps are to document the site, map it, and determine what artifacts can be brought to the surface, according to a spokesperson for the salvage team.

New Avalon portal

AVALON Waterways, through its Globus family of brands parent company, is launching a new globally integrated advisor portal.

Featuring new resources and improved booking functionality, the new portal, which is coming later this year, will represent a "significant advancement" in how advisors interact with Avalon.

Key features of the redesigned portal include a tailored MyAvalon booking experience, an improved reservation system, a trade training portal, and custom marketing resources.

There will also be step-by-step training on the day of the new portal's launch.

Ponant new Europe cruises



PONANT has announced its Europe Collection for next year, with cruises ranging from the Mediterranean to Scotland.

Highlights of the season include island hopping in Greece, navigating spectacular fjords in Norway, exploring the Shetland Islands, docking in the heart of one of the world's wine capitals Bordeaux, and sailing between Stockholm and Oslo with the Paris Opera Ballet's artistic troupe for onboard entertainment.

Three Grand Voyages are also available, offering back-to-back sailings, making them an ideal choice for long-haul visitors looking to maximise their time in Europe while minimising the hassle of packing and transfers.

Travellers can also experience a mix of iconic cities and quaint ports along the Iberian Peninsula and Atlantic Coast, Scottish Isles, and the Baltic Sea, with Ponant's cruise and land packages.

"It truly is a 'collection' as we want to remind travellers of the vast range of product we can offer in Europe," Chief Executive

Asia Pacific Dab Corbett said.

The local Ponant head spoke to the cruise line's unique selling point in Europe.

"Europe has become one of our most popular destinations as guests find true benefits in experiencing the continent on a small, slow-paced yacht-style experience with us whilst accessing Europe's most iconic but also seldom-visited ports - a significant difference when trying to stay away from the masses."

Ponant's European deployment sees it visit smaller, lesser-known ports, in order to avoid the crowds (**CW** 04 Oct).

Captain Thomas McCandless recently told **CW** Ponant is taking approaches such as skipping the busier ports altogether, as the line attempts to deliver its guests the best possible experience.

Travellers can also take advantage of exclusive limited-time offers, including Cruise & Land packages with pre-cruise stays and an \$800 Ponant Plus credit benefit per person - **CLICK HERE** for more. **MS**



Du-bai the way

I **SPENT** valuable time this week with the team at Dubai Harbour Cruise Terminal.

Operating two cruise venues, one in the heart of Dubai - access for two ships alongside and full turnarounds - as well as the larger Port Rashid, capable of taking six cruise vessels at one time, and able to cater to around 25,000 passengers.

It was fascinating to know that Dubai's cruise terminal was built entirely of recycled material and uses advanced techniques to help preserve the environment.

Of most interest was the discussion around opportunities and challenges which, despite our distance, share a great number of similarities with us in Australia.

Like us, they are exploring shore side power but struggling with the ROI in a market that is right-sizing for the future.

Their visitor base is around 70% international and 30% domestic - we are virtually a mirror image of that - but passenger spend at the destination is similar to ours.

As with our regional approach, they have a strong cruise alliance with neighbouring countries, especially when it comes to building sought-after itineraries.

It also reinforced the connectivity of the international blue highway.

The conflicts in the Red Sea region are taking their toll on cruise ship visits predicted to impact them for at least the next two seasons.

Naturally this is having a flow-on effect around the world, and will be a consideration for ships travelling each year from the Mediterranean down to Australia.

It was great to have these meetings with some important learnings to bring home.

MAGIC AH-OY!

What can you do on a *Disney Cruise Line* virtual voyage?

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