



### Visibility crash factor

**THE** National Transportation Safety Bureau has identified poor visibility as a contributing factor to the deaths of eight cruise pax in a floatplane crash near Ketchikan, Alaska late last month.

In a preliminary report into the accident released late last week, the NTSB found the pilot was operating under visual flight rules during "marginal visual meteorological conditions".

The NTSB report determined the accident occurred 25 Jun at around 1215, with the Promech Air single-engine floatplane taking off just 15 minutes prior.

It was the third of four planes taking off from a floating dock in Rudyerd Bay that day, all around five mins apart from each other.

Eight passengers, all residents of the United States, were onboard a shore excursion during a regular Holland America Line cruise in Alaska on the *MS Westerdam*.

A comprehensive post-accident is pending, once the wreckage is transported back to Ketchikan.

### Hoffmann shares wisdom

**CRUISING** can provide the key to growing travel agency businesses in Australia, according to industry stalwart Phil Hoffmann.

The eponymous SA travel retail identity (**pictured**) shared some of the secrets of his success late last week at the ATAB Business Builders conference in Sydney.

Hoffmann highlighted his strong belief that in contrast to some other sectors of the industry, "travel agents will always be at the epicentre of cruise related sales".

Phil Hoffmann Travel (PHT) has



been at the forefront of cruise industry growth, he said, and one of the most important things for staff is to ensure they are getting suitable training and getting the opportunity to inspect ships.

He told delegates that in Adelaide, there are only 28 ship visits per year, in contrast to Sydney agents who have a lot of opportunities to experience vessels in port.

Expertise is important because it's "so important to make sure that you're picking the right ships to sell...occasionally someone will come in and buy the wrong product for that person.

"Put them on the wrong ship and you will lose them for life".

Hoffmann said it was exciting to watch the huge development of cruise product and the quality of new offerings.

"If you do your homework, honestly you will grow your business so quickly," he said.

Phil Hoffmann Travel conducts more than 80 hosted cruises each year across five cruise lines.

Many are locally based but PHT also takes passengers further afield, with an onboard host who makes clients feel "really special".

It is also vital to build a cruise client database, Hoffmann said, with PHT emailing 30,000 customers every week with cruise deals - along with sending out hard copy publications such as the dedicated *Cruise* magazine.

Phil Hoffmann Travel also hosts regular functions and events - as well as a dedicated cruise expo, the PHT figurehead stated.

He said many cruise clients are "going on a cruise, with the next one deposited and a pencil mark around the one after that".

"You tell me any other part of the industry where you see that happen," he declared.

#### Today's issue of CW

*Cruise Weekly* today features three pages of all the latest cruise news and photos plus a full page from **JITO**.



### Win with Royal Caribbean International

To celebrate the launch of *Ovation of the Seas*' Australian itineraries, **Royal Caribbean International** is giving readers of *Cruise Weekly* the chance to win an *Ovation of the Seas* prize pack. Three lucky agents will win a voucher to iFLY Indoor Skydiving, so you'll be a pro by the time the ship arrives, a Jamie Oliver cookbook to try before you dine at his restaurant at sea, and a limited edition Royal Caribbean cocktail glass.



For your chance to be in the running, simply answer the following questions and have the most creative answer to the final question. Send your answers to [royalcaribbean@cruiseweekly.com.au](mailto:royalcaribbean@cruiseweekly.com.au)

\*\*Flights and accommodation are not included in the prize for iFLY voucher.



1. What activities can be undertaken in the Seaplex on *Ovation of the Seas*?

Need a hint? [CLICK HERE.](#)

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### Deep into Apple Isle

**CORAL** Expeditions has confirmed it will offer adventures in Tasmania during the 2015/16 summer, revealed as part of the line's recent rebrand from Coral Princess Cruises (**CW** 23 Jun).

Sixteen departures will operate over the course of the season, running from mid-Nov to Feb and operated by *Coral Expeditions I*.

A seven-night itinerary will sail from Hobart, spending two days with the line's own Parks & Wildlife Ranger exploring the Port Davey wilderness areas.

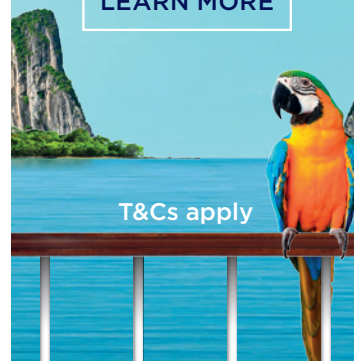
Further highlights of the voyage include a behind-the-scenes tour of Port Arthur and a morning hike in the Freycinet National Park.

Coral Expeditions gm Mark Fifield said the line's ship was well suited for exploring Tasmania.

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## Give a gift of cruising

**HALF-PRICE** on second cabins is on offer from APT on all river cruise departures in Europe from 26 Nov to 24 Dec as part of a new Family & Friends promotion.

Guests can save up to \$12,290 under the deal and includes the line's Magnificent Europe flagship Amsterdam to Budapest voyage.

## McCue at the Summit

**CELEBRITY** Cruises has named its first American female Captain in Kate McCue, who will take control of *Celebrity Summit* effective from next month.

McCue has worked her way up through the ranks from cadet to her current role as Master Mariner at Royal Caribbean Int'l.

## Brochure Spotlight

**A FEELING** of an elegant British manor welcomes guests travelling on Swan Hellenic to ports around the globe, according to the latest brochure from the line.

The new in-depth brochure offers readers a simplified look at the voyages operated by a single ship, dubbed *Minerva*.

Represented in Australia by Discover the World, the guide details highlights of the 2016 northern summer including the maiden cruise to the White Sea, just one of 15 itineraries.

The guide details the range of amenities available onboard, including a strong & informative guest speaker program and tailored port excursions included in the fare paid.

Guests can explore the Baltic, the Mediterranean as well as Britain, the Caribbean & more.

Entry to famous events such as the Edinburgh Military Tattoo and Chelsea Flower Show also coincide with *Minerva* voyages.

## Safety at sea legislation

**UNITED** States Senator Richard Blumenthal & co-sponsor Senator Edward Markey have jointly introduced a bill to the US Senate calling for new safety standards for the protection of US citizens being carried by cruise lines.

The 'Cruise Passenger Protection Act' seeks, among other things, to make mandatory that all cruise ships offering sleeping facilities for 250 pax or more install safety technology determining when a guest falls overboard, inclusive of video capture and an alarm.

Other measures include each ship carrying sea marshals aboard operating under US Coast Guard jurisdiction on each departure.

Further, it calls for the setting up of a consumer complaints toll-free phone line and an online complaints link, with records of all submissions kept and made public on a quarterly basis.

It also proposes that cruise ships involved in complaints be identified and publicly named.

The bill is an expansion and a strengthening of the Cruise Vessel Security & Safety Act, which was signed in 2010 but has been criticised as containing too many loopholes and being too lenient.

Safety provisions have long been on the radar for Blumenthal and fellow Senator Jay Rockefeller, known as a staunch proponent of better reporting protocols for crimes committed whilst at sea.

Should the bill be enacted into law, standards developed by the US Secretary of Transportation would require cruise lines to offer a summary of protections on all booking websites and all promotional material worldwide.

Cruise lines will face a maximum pecuniary penalty of \$50,000 if found to be in violation of the proposed law, if enacted.

The proposals have already received bipartisan support in the US House of Representatives.

Coincidentally, the timing of the bill's introduction came just less than ten years to the day since Connecticut man George

Smith IV went overboard on Royal Caribbean's *Brilliance of the Seas* in 2005 while on his honeymoon.

His family spoke out in support of the proposed legislation, expressing their frustration at a recently-closed FBI investigation determining it as a likely accident.

Smith's sister Bree has claimed her brother was thrown overboard after "a violent fight" in his room hours after reportedly winning US\$15,000 in the casino.

Soon after the incident, Smith's family accused RCCL of a cover-up by cleaning evidence and holding its own internal investigation.

RCCL since paid Smith's widow a US\$1 million settlement.

Senator Blumenthal said the fact cruise ships have no law enforcement makes it "the wild west of the sea".

According to records, hundreds of passengers and crew disappear from cruise ships all around the world over the course of a year.

Text in the introduced bill goes on to set minimum standards for health personnel onboard and life-saving training.

A well documented case in Australia last year involved the death of Paul Rossington and his girlfriend Kristen Schroder, who both disappeared off the coast of NSW while aboard *Carnival Spirit*.

The Cruise Passenger Protection Act has so far been read twice in the US Senate and been referred to the Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation.

## Cruise Calendar

This week's port calls of cruise ships at various destinations around Australia.

SYDNEY	
<i>Sun Princess</i>	14 Jul
<i>Pacific Pearl</i>	16 Jul
<i>Carnival Spirit</i>	17 Jul
<i>Pacific Pearl</i>	20 Jul
BRISBANE	
<i>Pacific Dawn</i>	18 Jul
<i>Pacific Pearl</i>	18 Jul
<i>Pacific Jewel</i>	19 Jul
PORT DOUGLAS	
<i>Pacific Jewel</i>	16 Jul
YORKEYS KNOB	
<i>Pacific Jewel</i>	15 Jul
DARWIN	
<i>Coral Princess</i>	16 Jul
<i>Dawn Princess</i>	16 Jul
<i>National Geographic Orion</i>	17 Jul

## Silversea 2017 World

**BOOKINGS** are now open for the 2017 World Cruise on luxury line Silversea, taking passengers from San Francisco to Monte Carlo onboard *Silver Whisper*.

Details of the voyage were released late last week and will see 62 ports in 25 countries visited over the 116-day journey.

Sailing west-bound from the Californian city on 06 Jan 2017, *Silver Whisper* will first head for Hawaii and the South Pacific, visiting New Zealand & Australia.

All-inclusive fares for the entire circumnavigation start from \$73,150pp twin share.

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## New Dawn for Princess Cruises



**FRESH** off its return to Australia from a major drydock renovation in Singapore, Princess Cruises' *Dawn Princess* is as good as new, as was discovered by a group of agents enjoying a recent tour.

The revitalised ship welcomed 50 Queensland agents onboard for a full tour while docking in Brisbane last weekend.

Following a welcome reception in the new Wheelhouse Bar, the agents partook in a sumptuous three-course lunch complete with a selection of premium wines.

After lunch, the group headed

on a full tour, agreeing the new-look Horizon Court, now offering the Amuleto Italian Cafe was a clear highlight.

Other features added to the ship during its Singapore refresh include the first dedicated whiskey bar on any Princess ship and a New Zealand Natural ice-cream outlet.

The agents are **pictured** above in the new *Dawn* atrium.

### Ponant meet & greet

**CRUISE** Traveller is inviting agents & their clients to a special information evening in Sydney to learn more about the Ponant style of expedition cruising.

The event will take place at the Pullman Quay Grand Sydney Harbour on 25 Aug, with sessions at 2pm and 6pm and refreshments served during each.

For more details, **CLICK HERE**.

**MEANWHILE**, Ponant has released a series of photospheres enabling guests to view candid images of Ponant ships in some of the world's most exotic locations.

Images were shot and prepared by Aussie snapper Tony Redhead.

**CLICK HERE** to view the photos.

## Lindblad now merged

**ADVENTURE** cruise operator Lindblad Expeditions has formally listed on the NASDAQ stock market under trading symbols 'LIND', 'LINDU' and 'LINDW'.

The listing comes after the company's merger with Capitol Acquisition Corp II was ratified by the latter's stockholders.

The combined company name is Lindblad Expedition Holdings Inc.

Company founder, president and CEO Sven-Olof Lindblad said the merger completion and public listing was an exciting milestone.

"The equity capital and public currency from the merger, together with funds from our recent debt financing (**CW** 25 Jun) give us significant resources to capitalise on the substantial demand for our expeditions by expanding the fleet and opportunistically seeking accretive strategic acquisitions."

## Tunisia off MSC radar

**LA GOULETTE**, Tunisia has been removed from MSC Cruises' entire 2015/16 winter season as a result of recent terrorist attacks.

The decision will see schedules of *MSC Preziosa* from 15 Nov to 23 Apr amended to visit Valletta, while existing Grand Voyages on *MSC Magnifica* and *MSC Poesia* from South America will instead call in at Alicante in Spain.

## Brands joining hands

**FIVE** of Carnival Australia's seven major brands represented in Australia have united to offer a suite of early Christmas presents in the form of special deals.

More than 20 offers departing from four Aussie ports feature in the new campaign, including a number of Christmas sailings - see [www.wlcl.com.au](http://www.wlcl.com.au) for details.

## Next Princess coming

**BUILDING** has begun on the third Princess Cruises ship in the line of next-generation ships which included predecessors *Royal Princess* and *Regal Princess*.

The official keel laying of the next Princess ship took place late last week at the Fincantieri yard in Monfalcone, Italy, attended by Princess Cruises executives.

With the ship already confirmed to be deployed to China in the summer of 2017, a traditional lion dance accompanied the ceremony for the 3,600-pax ship.

Many of the ship's features will match those of her two sisters, including an over-ocean SeaWalk, Princess Live! TV studio & more.



**PHIL** Hoffmann has experienced many of the world's cruise ships, but missed out on the christening ceremony for Princess Cruises' *Royal Princess*.

Although invited to the ceremony, which took place in Jun 2013 in Southampton, Hoffmann was unable to attend due to a prior commitment, he told the ATAB conference in Sydney last Thu (**see p1**).

Instead, he sent two of his top cruise staff to the christening in his place - unfortunately though, without telling his wife Alison they had been invited.

It turned out the event included a personal meet and greet with none other than Kate Middleton, the Duchess of Cambridge, who is the godmother of *Royal Princess*.

"Alison didn't talk to me for about three months after that," Hoffmann confided.

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