

# CRUISE

WEEKLY



Thursday 03 Sep 2015

## Cruise Weekly today

**Cruise Weekly** today features three pages of all the latest cruise news. The next issue of **CW**, to be published next Mon 07 Sep, will be a special bonus CLIA Cruise Week 2015 edition.

## Record year for cruising

**CRUISE** Down Under today released details of its forthcoming 2014-15 Economic Impact Report, with cruise ships visiting Australia delivering \$1.9 billion in direct expenditure and an economic impact in excess of \$3.3 billion.

Speaking at the CDU conference in Darwin, chairman Stephen Bradford highlighted record numbers of port calls, with 874 ship arrivals including 427 "turnarounds," where new passengers embark.

Ships visited a total of 30 ports across Australia, dominated by Queensland and Western Australia, while other indicators such as crew spending were also at record levels.

Interestingly the report highlights the high employment levels generated by cruising, with a 10.1% increase in direct jobs which amount to over 9,200.

All indicators are positive going forward too, with seven new ships to visit Australian shores in

the coming year including Holland America's *Noordam*, Princess Cruises' *Golden Princess*, RCI's *Explorer of the Seas*, P&O's *Pacific Eden* and *Pacific Aria*, Costa's *Costa Luminosa* and Azamara's *Azamara Quest*.

The only metric to decline was direct spending by cruise lines - simply because the cost of fuel has declined so significantly.

However despite this drop the overall impact has surged indicating much more spending by passengers.

The full CDU Economic Impact Report will be formally released in the coming weeks.

## Sydney berthing "appalling"

**CRUISE** lines are concerned about the berthing situation in Sydney Harbour, with just one spot available west of the Harbour Bridge for big ships in Australia's "marquee port".

Crystal Cruises' recently appointed head of itinerary development, Claudius Docekal, told delegates at the Cruise Down Under conference this morning that the situation was "appalling".

As well as improved berthing, other changes to encourage ships to visit more often and stay longer in Australia could include lower costs for marine services, business tax incentives, and better infrastructure to handle passengers, Docekal said.

## Pricing cheat sheet

**CELEBRITY** Cruises has issued a cheat sheet to help travel agents better sell its new tiered pricing structure which came into effect last Sun 09 Aug (**CW** Tue).

The 'Go! Big, Better, Best' format details the price increase increments per cruising night along with potential savings if each perk was booked separately.

**CLICK HERE** to access the sheet.

**CRUISE**  
WEEKLY  
on location in  
Darwin, NT

Today's issue of **CW** is coming to you from Darwin courtesy of Tourism NT as we report live from Cruise Down Under 2015.

**MORE** than 100 delegates from across Australia have gathered in Darwin this week for the 2015 Cruise Down Under conference.

Under the banner "Uniting Australia's Cruise Future," the event features key speakers from across the globe, including Michael Hackman from Genting HK, Tourism Australia deputy ceo Frances-Anne Keeler and Claudius Docekal, who joined Crystal Cruises from Azamara about three months ago.

The conference is being hosted in conjunction with Tourism NT, which is taking the opportunity to showcase its capital to delegates, some of whom yesterday enjoyed a behind the scenes look at the Darwin port.

The strong potential of the Chinese market has been a key focus, with the country's burgeoning middle class seen as a key opportunity.

Cruise Down Under ceo Jill Abel also outlined the organisation's growth, with ever-stronger relationships with cruise lines, further development of education for inbound operators in terms of cruise-ready product, and showcasing Australia's cruise operating in global forums.

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### True North allegedly told to reflag offshore

**PRIME** Minister Tony Abbott's office has rejected claims that North Star Cruises - operators of the *True North* expedition vessel - were told to sack their workforce and hire cheaper foreign labour.

The claim appeared in a Senate inquiry into new shipping laws.

Currently before parliament, the proposed changes will relax rules requiring foreign flagged ships to pay Australian wages for their first 183 days operating locally.

North Star's Bill Milby has insisted he was told by a Dept of Transport official to consider taking his ship off the Australian Shipping Registry, allowing it to pay lower wages to foreign crew.

A department spokesman has denied the comment was made.

Read the document in full [HERE](#).

### MSC into China

**MSC** Cruises yesterday announced a new strategic partnership with Chinese outbound tourism provider CAISSA Touristic Group, which will see *MSC Lirica* homeport in Shanghai to service the Chinese home market.

The ship will arrive in China in May 2016 after its upcoming Grand Voyage (**CW** 21 Aug).

MSC ceo Gianni Onorato said the ship was being renovated as part of the company's Renaissance program, with several distinctive traits "especially designed for the cruising enjoyment of Chinese consumers".

He said that while maintaining a "Mediterranean atmosphere," the 2,500 passenger ship will feature a high percentage of native Mandarin speaking guest-facing crew, with all guest services provided in Mandarin.

"it will also offer popular as well as high-end Chinese cuisine as well as more traditional and popular entertainments," he said.

Full details of *MSC Lirica's* Chinese itineraries will be revealed in the coming weeks.

### HAL revamps wi-fi

**HOLLAND** America Line is trialling new internet plans, including a new cheaper option which limits access to eight social media sites including Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn.

HAL's *Westerdam* is at this stage the only vessel to offer the "social" plan which costs just US\$5 for 24 hours or US\$25 for a seven day voyage, according to a post on the *Cruise Critic* website.

Other options include the "Enhanced" plan (\$16 per day or \$60 for the voyage) which excludes Skype and Spotify, as well as "Premiere" (\$25 for 24 hours, \$99 for the voyage) which includes full coverage.

HAL is also trialling some "last day" plans for pax wanting to make onward arrangements, costing \$12 for 30 min access.

# Kembla calling to cruise

**ROYAL** Caribbean has taken its own initiative to investigate a supplementary home port to Sydney Harbour, advising it will visit Port Kembla in Wollongong on a voyage in Oct next year.



Announced yesterday, the line will bring its 2,466-passenger vessel *Radiance of the Seas* into Port Kembla on 30 Oct during a seven-night Tasmania & Australia roundtrip cruise from Sydney.

The visit is estimated to inject more than \$890,000 into the local economy through shore excursions and shopping.

Importantly though, the visit shows Royal Caribbean is growing tired of the inertia surrounding capacity in Sydney Harbour, with regional vice-president Gavin Smith saying the visit was the first step in investigating an ongoing relationship with the Illawarra.

"Including Port Kembla on our itineraries will provide our guests the opportunity to sample all that Wollongong and the South Coast has to offer," Smith said.

"At the same time, it will give us the chance to investigate Port Kembla as an alternative home port, as an overflow to congestion in Sydney Harbour."

The visit to Port Kembla was two

years in the making, according to Destination Wollongong board member Cr Leigh Colacino, who hinted at more visits to come.

"I am excited to announce that Royal Caribbean ships will soon become a regular sight at Port Kembla and I will be standing dockside to welcome *Radiance of the Seas* when she makes her first visit to Wollongong," he added.

"This commitment from Royal Caribbean is also a wonderful endorsement of the new operators of Port Kembla and their commitment to the economy of the Illawarra."

Destination Wollongong general manager Mark Sleight said the visit "will allow us to show off Wollongong and the South Coast to a whole new audience across the world".



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### Final fuel ruling

**NSW** Environment Minister, Mark Speakman, has confirmed the final form of a new regulation which mandates the use of low sulfur fuel in cruise ships operating on Sydney Harbour.

Effective 01 Oct 2015 ships will be required to use low sulfur fuel (0.1% or less) when berthed in Sydney Harbour, and effective 01 Jul 2016 the requirement will also apply to all Sydney operations - not just when berthed.

"The regulation also provides for alternative compliance with emissions requirements through innovative technological alternatives such as exhaust scrubbers," Speakman said.

He said the government would also continue community consultation in regional areas, with a view to applying the new regulation to all NSW ports by 01 Jul 2016.



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## Brochure Spotlight

### Harmony of the Seas mini-brochure



**THIS** nine-page mini-brochure detailing the features & amenities available to passengers travelling on the forthcoming mega-vessel *Harmony of the Seas* has been released by Royal Caribbean International.

The digital guide showcases highlights of the vessel including Wonderland, a two-storey specialty restaurant as well as pools and waterparks, onboard entertainment venues and an array of technology.

To view and download the guide **CLICK HERE**.

## Basecamp cruise deal

**ADVENTURE** tour operator World Expeditions is offering US\$1,400pp off its 11-day Antarctic Peninsula on Ortelius Voyage departing 16 Nov 2015.

Operating roundtrip from Ushuaia, the sailing offers a range of onshore activities including snowshoeing and photography as well as kayaking and zodiac trips.

The discount equates to 20% of the voyage price and is valid on all cabin types - ph 1300 720 000.

## Cruise leaders gather in Darwin



**THIS** morning presenters at the Cruise Down Under conference in Darwin included this group: Michael Hackman from Genting HK (Star Cruises); Tourism Australia's Frances-Anne Keeler; Dwain Wall from WorldCruise.cn and panel moderator Ted Blamey of Chart Consulting.

The fascinating discussion highlighted the global growth of the cruise market, and its strong potential for Australia.

Star Cruises is closely watching developments in China, and

while acknowledging that many other operators are also setting their sights on the Asian market, Hackman noted that "we were here first".

Keeler spoke about key Tourism Australia campaigns, including the established Restaurant Australia promotion and plans to launch a new aquatic and coastal initiative next year which will tie in ideally with the cruise sector.

And Wall also highlighted the growth of mobile in China, with his company facilitating online cruise bookings for both travel agents and consumers.

Lots more pics from CDU at [facebook.com/cruiseweekly](http://facebook.com/cruiseweekly).

## Raft waterslide at sea

**ROYAL** Caribbean ship *Liberty of the Seas* will become the first in the RCI fleet to offer a new type of waterslide on a cruise ship where passengers ride in rafts.

Dubbed 'Boomerango', the slide is being developed by the same firm that provided RCI with the FlowRider technology now available on many of its vessels.

Riders plummet down a steep drop, with the momentum then sending them up an adjacent wall and briefly into the air.

The raft slide is one of three being added to *Liberty* as part of a major renovation in Jan 2016 which will also see twin racing slides fitted to the Sports Deck.

## Australia key for A&K

**ABERCROMBIE & Kent's** Akorn destination management division now offers land programs in Australia for 17 cruise brands.

The company's senior vice president for global cruise business and operations, David Vass, met with A&K's teams in Sydney, Brisbane and Melbourne last week, and is also at the Cruise Down Under conference in Darwin this week.

The company will handle almost 500 cruise turnarounds in Australia next year.

## PORTHOLE

**ON-BOARD** health and wellness is set to be taken to a whole new level by Star Cruises, with the company currently expanding its fleet with newbuilds specifically targeted to the Chinese market.

Michael Hackman, Genting Hong Kong Executive Vice President of Marine Operations and New Ship Building, outlined the plans this morning at the Cruise Down Under conference in Darwin, confirming that the vessels will even feature on-board MRI machines to undertake full body scans.

And believe it or not, "passengers will also be able to have their DNA sequenced during their cruise," he promised, with the upcoming vessels also set to feature massive spa facilities with capacity for more than 100 treatments at a time, strongly focused on reflexology.

Hackman added that they will also have full medical centres and "plenty of Botox".

**MEANWHILE** also at the Darwin conference one of the presenters today was Claudius Docekal from Crystal Cruises, speaking about Itinerary and Destination Development Trends.

US-based Docekal, who's had a long career in the cruise industry including with SeaDream and Azamara Club Cruises, stunned delegates as he opened his talk with an intimate confession.

"I am a 50-year-old virgin," he confided, adding the explanation "this is the first time I have ever attended a Cruise Down Under conference".

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