

Cruise Weekly today

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

APT legal action

LEGAL action launched by APT could undo the Australian Government's order cruise ships leave Australian waters.

APT has asked the Federal Court to invalidate part of a 27 Mar determination made by Minister for Health Greg Hunt ordering foreign-registered cruise ships to depart Aussie waters, which would see its Bahamas-flagged vessel *Caledonian Sky* forced to leave.

The lawsuit is set to be held at noon today.

APT Travel Group recently extended the suspension of all operations for a number of its brands until 31 May (**CW** 27 Mar).

Agents will be key post-COVID: CLIA

AGENTS will be key to the cruise industry's recovery after the COVID-19 pandemic, Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA) MD Australasia Joel Katz (**pictured**) believes.

Communicating with travel agent members in Australia yesterday seeking their support to reinforce cruising's significance, Katz said the industry faced a lack of understanding about its size and economic significance to Australia, even after decades of local growth.

"We'd like your help in speaking out about how deeply rooted cruising is in our part of the world, and how vital it is to our tourism industry and the wider economy," Katz said.

"Although we are in a challenging news environment, our wider CLIA community is well placed to tell a more positive story.



"Cruising helps sustain jobs across a range of sectors - travel agencies, tour operators, guides, transport workers, hoteliers, maritime workers, technical suppliers and the many local food and wine providers who stock our ships.

"We need to show how extensive our community is, we

can't be demonised, we need recognition for what we've achieved - we're an industry that has put people first, and we continue to work in support of our people - guests, crew and communities.

"We're a resilient industry with an enormous number of supporters, and by uniting our community we can be confident we'll overcome these challenges in the long term."

CLIA is encouraging travel agents to write to their state and federal Members of Parliament, create social media posts, reach out to clients and colleagues, and create videos to share online, utilising the hashtag #WeAreCruise.

The number of Australians taking a cruise reached a record 1.35 million in 2018, with the industry contributing more than \$6 billion in the last financial year.

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How have cruise operators coped with the coronavirus crisis? Read more in the April issue of *travelBulletin*.

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WHILE there are very few (if any) cruise ships presently sailing the oceans, there is something out there...

A giant ocean creature named a siphonophorae was discovered by scientists yesterday off WA's Ningaloo Coast.

The crew of the Schmidt Ocean Institute's research vessel *Falkor* made the discovery, posting a video of it to Twitter.

The creature's body is estimated to be almost 50 metres long, with marine biologist Rebecca Helm describing the organism.

"It's made of millions of interconnected clones, like if the Borg and the Clone Wars had a baby together," she explained.

"There are about a dozen different jobs a clone can do in the colony, and each clone is specialised to a particular task."

The siphonophore is most closely related to the jellyfish.

View the video [HERE](#).

Greg Mortimer's Aussies departing this week

AUSTRALIAN passengers aboard the beleaguered *Greg Mortimer* will be the first to disembark, Aurora Expeditions has told **Cruise Weekly**, with a repatriation flight to leave for Melbourne in 48-72 hours.

With the assistance of the Department of Foreign Affairs & Trade (DFAT), an Airbus A340, operated by an unnamed airline, will take Australians home, with Aurora having requested DFAT New Zealanders join them.

Both COVID-positive and -negative passengers will fly, with the company believing the two groups will be separated in different cabin areas.

"The plane going to Australia is set up with medical facilities for this type of situation and will be managed in alignment with current COVID-19 protocol to ensure the health and safety of all onboard," Aurora said.

While the final flight cost per passenger is as yet undetermined, the hard cost equates to \$15,000 per passenger, with Aurora working with the Government to "ensure this full amount is not passed on to each individual."

Yesterday also saw the

conclusion of COVID-19 testing aboard the ship, which revealed 128 on board have tested positive, while 89 have tested negative, with the company noting there were no fevers, and all passengers were asymptomatic.

The news is far less favourable for European and US guests, with each pax having to wait until they return a negative test result until their departure can be organised.

These passengers will fly home via Sao Paulo, and will be retested "every two or three days".

The company is hoping European and US guests who have already tested negative will be able to begin their repatriation later in the week, but will still be subject to an additional test, and permission from the Uruguayan Government.

"There are many patients over 70 years of age, some of them with other chronic conditions such as heart and lung diseases," said a doctor dispatched to the ship.

"Those patients may fall seriously ill tomorrow even if they looked well today...most of the passengers are well."

Cruise & Maritime Voyages extends halt

CRUISE & Maritime Voyages (CMV) has extended its suspension of cruise operations through to 24 May.

The cruise line will cease all voyages across the globe from 24 Apr, with all the line's ships returned or returning to their home ports in the United Kingdom and Germany, and all passengers to be repatriated.

None of the company's ships have recorded any instances of COVID-19 aboard.



with Joel Katz
MD, CLIA Australasia

HAVING been part of our community in Australasia for almost 90 years, cruise lines have been there as we've weathered tough times in the past.

Their ships have assisted during war, they've helped distribute aid after natural disasters; cruise lines have responded to cyclones and hurricanes, among our Pacific neighbours and around the world; they've helped honour our veterans, and as we've seen recently, they've backed our emergency services personnel in times of crisis.

At other times they might be less visible, but they're still deeply connected to the communities they visit; they've been responsible for developing regional tourism around Australia and New Zealand, they've backed health and education projects for communities in the South Pacific, they've assisted conservation projects to support wildlife, and they've worked with Indigenous communities to connect artists with international visitors in remote locations.

Our cruise industry is deeply connected with Australian and New Zealand communities and has worked hard to support the destinations that help make cruising so memorable.

It's tough hearing some of the rhetoric out there right now, but the reality is the cruise industry could never have achieved the success it has if it wasn't a passionate and integral part of our society.



Celebrity concerns

A CREW member aboard *Celebrity Infinity* has raised concerns over whether Celebrity Cruises unnecessarily put the ship's crew at risk.

Julia Melim told CNN management onboard, as well as some of her colleagues, neglected social distancing guidelines and were dismissive of her concerns regarding the crew's health.