



Aurora Expeditions seeks new MD

EXCLUSIVE

ROBERT Halfpenny (pictured) has resigned from the board of Aurora Expeditions, as well as from his role as the company's Managing Director.

Halfpenny's departure comes about three and a half years after joining the cruise line (**CW** 22 Dec 2016), having overseen its expansion from a small 56-pax operation using chartered vessels to a two-ship business, carrying almost 250 passengers.

His tenure saw the launch of sales and marketing for the new *Greg Mortimer*, which has since completed its inaugural Antarctic season, as well as the *Sylvia Earle*, scheduled to debut in 2021/22, and a possible third newbuild (**CW** 21 Jan).

Halfpenny's departure initially came in early May, at which point the company's Chairman Neville Buch told staff and suppliers



the outgoing Managing Director would be taking three months of personal leave.

"Bob had been working incredibly long hours even before the COVID-19 outbreak to ensure we were in the best position possible for our maiden season of the *Greg Mortimer*," Buch said.

"His incredible dedication, diplomacy and integrity are

qualities that aren't easy to find in leaders, and I'm sure you will all agree that Robert is an integral member of the Aurora Expeditions team who will be sorely missed over the next few months," he added.

Aurora has now confirmed Halfpenny's resignation, but says he is still discussing with the board future opportunities within the company.

In the meantime, Buch is leading the business in an Executive Chairman role, with a recruitment process for a replacement Aurora Chief Executive Officer understood to be currently under way.

Aurora Expeditions has been in the headlines recently, after a complex repatriation when the *Greg Mortimer* was blocked from disembarking passengers in South America (**CW** 08 Apr) due to on-board COVID-19 infections.

Dream awakens

GENTING Hong Kong has announced *Explorer Dream* will return on 26 Jul, operating two and three-night "Taiwan Island-Hopping" itineraries.

Homeported out of Keelung, the trips will call at Penghu, Matzu and Kinmen Islands.

The relaunch will make Dream Cruises the second cruise line in the world to start sailing after the global COVID-19 industry shutdown, following the recent return of Hurtigruten (**CW** 19 Jun).

Genting has also developed new operating procedures to ensure guest and crew safety.

Last day for comp

GET those "wellness selfies" in for the opportunity to win a voyage with Celebrity Cruises.

See **page 2** for full details of the competition.

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WHALE-WATCHING season is a joy for all, but if you're on a private vessel hoping to get a glimpse of the beasts, remember - if it seems like they're getting away, they're probably trying to!

Researchers from the Dolphin Research Institute are worried about whale-chasing boats, with an incident of harassment, taking place on the weekend near Cape Schanck, Victoria.

A mother southern right whale and her calf were seen showing signs of stress, travelling abnormally fast, and frequently changing direction, as the pursuing boat attempt to photograph them.

The chase was witnessed by a volunteer citizen scientist with the institute's Two Bays Whale Project, alongside a number of other reported incidents of whales being pursued by boats off the Victorian coast.

The Institute's Executive Director Jeff Weir said such actions could draw a hefty fine.

MSC to Australia

MSC Cruises has confirmed that its Jan world cruise aboard *MSC Magnifica* (CW 23 Jun) will visit several Australian ports, including a stay in Sydney on 26 and 27 Feb.

Magnifica will also visit Brisbane on 01 Mar 2021 and Cairns on 03 Mar.

Emerald's Aussie push



SCENIC Group's Emerald Waterways will become a stand-alone brand in the Australian market from next month (CW breaking news), having been marketed under the Evergreen Tours & Cruises brand since 2014.

A new European river cruising brochure and product for 2021 will launch in coming weeks, with the river cruise experience to stay the same.

Emerald said the move would provide travellers with a seamless experience from booking through to when they arrive home.

"Emerald Waterways is in every other market, including New Zealand, it was just that Evergreen was selling into its sister company," Evergreen Director - Sales, Marketing & Product Angus Crichton told *Cruise Weekly*.

Crichton said the push links well with sister cruise line Emerald Yacht Cruises, with the brands to become "a great one-stop shop for small ship cruising".

Phone numbers will remain the same and Evergreen will continue to provide its land-based touring.

Pictured: *Emerald Sun*.

More Murray!

MURRAY River Paddlesteamers has launched a new four-night cruise due to demand, departing 02 Nov.

The regional cruise line is also offering 14 whole boat charters between 20 and 21 Sep, departing on a mixture of four- and six-night cruises.

Director Craig Burgess noted strong bookings from local travel agents now pivoting to domestic due to the pause in overseas travel - call (03) 5482 5244.



This month Cruise Weekly has partnered with Celebrity Cruises to give you the chance to WIN a free cruise for two people onboard *Celebrity Solstice* departing Sydney.

Just like you, we're dreaming of seeing new shorelines on the horizon. Until then, we want to ensure you are looking after yourself because a little bit of self-love goes a long way!

How to enter:

1. Snap your best wellness selfie (whatever that means to you)
2. Post the shot in *Celebrity's Trade Facebook Group*
3. Include the hashtags #ModernLuxury and #CruiseWeekly

The most creative entry which features both hashtags will win!

