

Cruise Weekly today

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features two pages of all the latest cruise industry news.

NSW gets tough

THE NSW Government has announced it will no longer allow passengers to disembark from cruise ships in the state until it has "settled on the agreed new measures".

The move comes after public scrutiny over the state's handling of disembarkation procedures in recent weeks, notably the *Ruby Princess* which has recorded more than 130 cases of COVID-19 among its pax after leaving the ship.

"I do not want any further action taken in relation to releasing any pax from any boat in Sydney until we get a tick off from all authorities," said Premier Gladys Berejiklian.

CMV furious after McGowan backflip

CRUISE & Maritime Voyages (CMV) claims it was blindsided by WA Premier Mark McGowan's decision to reverse permission for *Vasco da Gama*'s passengers to disembark in Fremantle on Fri as promised.

McGowan announced the move during a press conference late yesterday, revealing that all pax with an Australian residency will be transported to Rottnest Island to spend 14 days in quarantine before being given permission to continue their onward journey.

"We have seen what has happened in Sydney Harbour, it was a complete and utter disaster and I will not allow that to happen in WA," McGowan said.

All non-Australians will need to remain on *Vasco da Gama* until they can travel directly to their country of residence.

CMV Australia MD Dean Brazier has expressed his outrage about



the way in which the WA Govt arrived at its decision.

"On behalf of CMV, we would like to express our disappointment that the WA Premier did not inform us of this decision before sharing this news with the public, and that we were unable to inform our passengers before it appeared in media reports," he said.

"We are only now beginning to notify pax and their travel agents.

"We have followed all protocols to ensure a smooth arrival of *Vasco da Gama* into Fremantle,

and have recorded no health issues with our guests who are on board," Brazier added.

CMV is in the process of confirming the details with the WA State Government, as well as working with the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Australian Border Force and Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA) to seek further clarity on the unfolding situation.

Vasco da Gama, which is carrying 798 Australians and 109 New Zealanders, has now spent 13 straight days at sea.

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Magnifica is back

CONFUSION over the plight of MSC Cruises' *Magnifica* continues, after the ship was told it could not dock in Dubai as planned, forcing a return to Fremantle in WA.

The troubled vessel refuelled in WA only this week, amid accusations by WA Premier Mark McGowan that passengers on board have suspected cases of COVID-19, a claim the cruise line has strenuously denied.

McGowan has since restated that no one will be allowed to disembark the ship, unless a passenger is in a "life-threatening emergency and needs medical attention".

A spokesperson for MSC Cruises restated that all pax on board are well & not suffering from any respiratory diseases.



CRUISE ship passengers are not the only people in the oceans affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, with Thai singer and actor Phakin "Tono" Khamwilaisak having to cut short his swim between 12 islands to raise awareness for marine conservation.

On the plus side, the six days the fit philanthropist was in the water, he managed to raise more than \$2,506,279.

Funds will be donated to the Marine and Coastal Resources Department to buy equipment.

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Carnival postpones



CARNIVAL Cruise Line and P&O Cruises have announced the extension of their voluntary suspension in Australian and New Zealand until 15 May in response to the escalating COVID-19 crisis (**CW** breaking news), following a similar extension revealed by Royal Caribbean Cruises yesterday (**CW** 25 Mar).

Both brands announced earlier this month that operations would be suspended until 11 Apr, with this second round of cancellations adding 30 days to their originally announced hiatus.

"The impact of COVID-19 is affecting business and personal routines around the world, we understand it is not ideal to have your cruise holiday postponed; however, we all have a role to play in stopping the spread of this virus during this unprecedented time," said Carnival Cruise Line President Christine Duffy.

"We will get through these tough times together and look forward to welcoming our guests back on board again soon, when the time is right."

The cruise line added that it was currently making contact with guests and travel agents who

are impacted by the extended suspension period and is offering flexible rebooking options.

Meanwhile fellow Carnival Corporation brand P&O Cruises said it was attempting to make the extended suspension period "as simple as possible" for affected clients in a complex domestic climate which has seen individual states deploy varying approaches to the cruise sector.

"We're living in a period of rapid change with governments having to make decisions each day that are dramatically changing the way businesses and broader communities are going about their everyday lives," said local President Sture Myrmell.

The changes will cut scheduled cruises aboard *Pacific Dawn*, *Pacific Explorer*, as well as 11 planned voyages on *Pacific Aria* in New Zealand.

State of Origin and Taste of Tasmania cruises will also be cancelled, the line confirmed.

P&O also added that it will be protecting travel agent commissions on bookings for cancelled cruises that were paid in full and for the total amount of the future cruise credits.

Shattered dreams

DREAM Cruises has made the decision to withdraw *Explorer Dream* from returning to Australia and New Zealand between 08 Oct 2020 and 13 Mar 2021 in response to the COVID-19 situation.

Affected guests will have the option of receiving a future cruise credit towards any Dream Cruises voyage until 31 Dec 2021, in addition to \$250 of on board credit, or alternatively, guests can choose to receive a full refund.

"We are deeply saddened by this decision however we must take these extraordinary precautionary measures in order to limit the spread of the virus and play our part in recovery," said Vice President Sales and Marketing, ANZ Brigita Devries.

While *Explorer Dream* will not return to Australia and New Zealand in the immediate future, Dream Cruises is adamant the ship will be back in the Australian market once the crisis is over.

Artania in distress

GERMAN cruise ship *Artania* is reportedly anchored off the coast of Fremantle with seven passengers on board diagnosed with COVID-19.

The Phoenix Reisen-owned vessel has no Australians on board among its more than 800 pax, with WA Premier Mark McGowan calling on the Australian Navy to help, insisting the ship should "leave and go to its home port".

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