



## Ponant appoints Hall as APAC CEO

**PONANT** has appointed Chris Hall (**pictured**) as regional Chief Executive Officer across Asia-Pacific to support the line's growth and expansion in the area.

The long-time APT Travel Group (ATG) executive - who left the business late last year after more than two decades of leadership - has been charged with Ponant's plan to accelerate its range and depth through additional ship deployments in Asia-Pacific, such as the three-masted sailing yacht *Le Ponant*, and the line's newest vessel *Le Commandant Charcot*.

These two ships will join *Le Laperouse* and *Le Soleal*, which have been operating in Asia-Pacific for a number of years.

Sarina Bratton will remain as Ponant Asia-Pacific Chair and focus on strategic growth and opportunity, describing Hall as "an experienced leader in the global tour operating, river cruise,



expeditions and distribution space".

"Via Ponant's "Explore to Inspire" global strategic plan, Chris will bring an additional level of experience to our International Executive Committee and global operations," Bratton enthused.

"As a regional team, we have established a strong foundation to expand and Chris' appointment will further enhance our ability

to provide our guests with even more luxury exploration and expedition experiences."

Hall added: "with the benefit of a proven operational and sales team in APAC, successfully led by Deb Corbett, I feel confident that we can explore new and different opportunities to enhance our guests' experiences and bring trade partners even stronger results...from a wider company perspective, the Ponant Group is positioned for successful growth, and I look forward to making a significant contribution."

Hall will be retained by Ponant as a contractor from next month, before taking up his full-time CEO and Special Advisor role in Feb.

His extensive industry expertise saw him oversee the large ATG portfolio, including the group's investments in small ship operator Noble Caledonia and river cruise giant AmaWaterways.

### Cruise Weekly today


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

### Weston Cruise & Travel merger

**TOP** selling cruise agency Weston Cruise & Travel in the ACT is merging with Chris Watson Travel, as part of a move by owner Deb Long to transition toward retirement.

Long has been running Weston Cruise & Travel for over a decade, with both agencies part of the Travellers Choice national network.

"By combining Chris' youthful energy and resources with my knowledge and experience we will ensure two powerhouse agencies continue to thrive," she said, while Watson noted that he "remains open to further growth opportunities'.



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## PORTHOLE

**REGENT** Seven Seas Cruises took its new brand partnership with David Jones (*CW* 23 Sep) to loftier heights, at a special breakfast to celebrate the Regent-adorned windows and the in-store cruise lounge.

Regent's effervescent VP and GM of Sales for Australia and NZ, Lisa Pile (pictured), was totally on-brand, with her dress matching the iconic houndstooth pattern in the department store's logo.

Pile's trend-setting power move must surely see her stylish outfit now become standard garb for the Regent staff team across the globe.



DAVID JONES

## Aranui discount

**ARANUI** Cruises is offering \$1,000 off its passenger/cargo voyages for next year.

All twin-share cabins aboard Aranui's trips in the first half of 2023 have been discounted, with \$2,000 off when booked by 09 Dec.

The saving applies to all cruises departing Papeete aboard *Aranui 5* between Jan and Jun (except the five-day Tuamotus cruise).

Most of the voyages are Aranui's traditional 12-day roundtrip from Papeete to the Marquesas, but for the first time, savings are also being offered on Discovery cruises to the Pitcairn and Cook Islands.

# Disney anticipation at fever pitch

**LAST** night Disney Cruise Line held a gala event at the Sydney Opera House, in the lead up to tomorrow's opening of sales (at 8am AEST and 11am NZDT) for *Disney Wonder's* Australia and New Zealand season (*CW* 12 Sep).

Guests were treated to plenty of Disney fanfare, including Mickey ears, a performance by songstress Ricki-Lee Coulter, and a wildly popular appearance by none other than Mickey and Minnie Mouse, who danced and posed for hundreds of selfies.

Thomas Mazloum, President of Disney Signature Experiences, which includes Disney Cruise Line, Disney Vacation Club and Adventures by Disney, told *Cruise Weekly* how excited he was about the line's first ever operations in local waters.

Disney's cruise operations are expanding rapidly with the launch this year of *Disney Wish* and the upcoming *Disney Treasure*, plus a third newbuild, providing scope for the operation's existing vessels to expand into new markets.

"When we looked at where we could send the ships, Australia and NZ were the first places we thought of," Mazloum told *CW*.

He cited the strong affinity for other Disney products in the local markets, with Aussies and Kiwis comprising a key international market for Disney Parks and Resorts, as well as having high levels of engagement with other parts of the huge Disney portfolio.

"We always dream about new



ways of introducing Disney around the world...as we were going through our plans of how to deploy these ships, we were really looking all around the world and I hands down have to tell you everyone within our organisation said it's got to be Australia and New Zealand."

The event included key trade partners, with agents and wholesalers such as Creative Cruising, The Travel Junction and others having taken many pre-registrations for the cruises where "the ship is the destination".

Flight Centre Travel Group alone has taken 30,000 expressions of interest, with Mazloum saying the strong interest across the sector will hopefully convert into a rapid sellout of the local itineraries.

He told *CW* it's expected that almost all of the bookings will come from locals, and also noted that the Disney cruise product sees strong demand from "new to cruise" customers, lifting the wider industry by introducing holidays at sea to new markets.

Mazloum is pictured above third

from left with Andrea Robinson, Disney; Astrid Richardson, Flight Centre Independent Division GM; James Kavanagh, Flight Centre Global Leisure CEO; Dani Galloway, FCTG Independent & Premium Global MD; & Jeff van Langeveld, Disney VP of Marketing & Sales International.



**STEPHEN** Mahoney from Destination NSW is all ears with the CLIA team of Karen Koop, Jon Murrie and Marita Nasic.

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## Fred. Olsen saving

A **SAVING** has been released on a new voyage next year with Fred. Olsen Cruise Lines, to Antarctica from London return, circling South America.

Australians can save \$1,715 and receive a free, two-night, pre-cruise stay in London, with a city tour, plus bonus onboard spending money, when booking by 31 Oct through Cruise Traveller.

The 80-night voyage will be detailed further in Fred. Olsen's first-ever Australian brochure, set to be released soon by Cruise Traveller.

## NCL team heads to Miami



**NORWEGIAN** Cruise Line's Australian team last week travelled to Miami to

the company's global sales conference.

The team collaborated with Norwegian's other international sales operations, and celebrated its success as "one of the most formidable operations in the cruise industry", with Senior Manager Sales Angela Middleton honoured on the global stage for her outstanding sales contribution to the cruise line.

**Pictured** is the local Norwegian team: Business Development Managers Jacinta Baker and Vanessa Green, Director of Sales Damian Borg, Vice President & Managing Director Ben Angell, Business Development Manager Craig McLaurin, Middleton, and Business Development Manager Megan Porter.



## Riding the cruise wave

**SUCH** positive news as our major cities and regional ports welcome cruise ships back to their destinations.

*Coral Princess* sailed into Melbourne two weeks ago for a spectacular arrival marking the first ship call into that city in more than two years.

Even more importantly, this visit heralded the announcement of P&O, Princess and Cunard homeporting their ships in Melbourne from Nov.

The reopening of this major metropolitan gateway also connects the dots to regional port visits such as Phillip Island, bringing welcome economic contributions from passenger and crew visits.

Melbourne also acts as an important conduit on itineraries to South Australia, Tasmania, and even New Zealand.

*Coral Princess* will also make her way across to WA creating another first as she sails into ports like Albany for the first time since the maritime border was closed.

As we look toward summer, momentum continues to build as the country welcomes more ships in the next month, including *Carnival Splendor* and *Carnival Luminosa*, *Majestic Princess*, *Celebrity Eclipse*, *Ovation of the Seas* and *Quantum of the Seas*.

As we ride this wave of cruise arrivals, our members are starting to see the benefits flow.

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