



### Cruise Weekly today

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

### Sell three, cruise free with American Queen

**AMERICAN** Queen Voyages is promoting its Travel Agent Incentive Program, under which advisors can earn a complimentary cruise if they make three bookings.

The scheme highlights the Journey Beyond offshoot's wide array of US-based river, lake, ocean, and expedition cruises under the line's Winter Savings Event which is open for reservations until 31 May.

Bookings can be made via the Australian call centre on 1800 076 290, while full training, sales and marketing information is available at [agents.journeybeyond.com](http://agents.journeybeyond.com).

## CLIA labels "tourism tax" as "unfair"

**THE** tourism sector has been unfairly hit with an "unreasonable" passenger tax increase, Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA) believes.

The trade alliance yesterday joined with the rest of the Australian travel industry in calling for a freeze on the passenger tax (**CW** yesterday), hopes of which were dashed when a \$10 increase from \$60 to \$70 was announced last night in the federal budget.

Treasurer Jim Chalmers (**pictured**) said the increase will take effect from Jul 2024. CLIA believes the travel industry has been dealt an "unfair blow" by the increase, which it said will hamper efforts to drive a revival in international tourism.

Managing Director Joel Katz said cruising was playing a vital role in Australia's tourism recovery,



which he believes should be supported, not taxed.

He warned increasing the passenger movement charge will only result in more expensive fares for local travellers and international visitors.

"Australia already charges international travellers some of the highest fees in the world, and this only makes things worse," Katz said.

"This is yet another cost for Australian cruise fans and overseas visitors, creating a

disincentive that affects countless Australian businesses like travel agents, tour operators and industry suppliers."

"This increase will undermine the cruise industry's efforts to revive its \$5 billion-a-year contribution to the national economy and its ability to bring economic opportunities to communities around the country."

CLIA had supported the position of other industry bodies, including the Tourism & Transport Forum, the Australian Federation of Travel Agents, and the Australian Airports Association, in opposing an increase to the PMC.

The charge is imposed on everyone departing the country, including nationals, with Katz saying CLIA's agent members are telling the Association now is not the time to put an additional burden on travellers.

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On location aboard **Vista**

Today's issue of *CW* is coming to you courtesy of Oceania Cruises, aboard the brand new *Vista*.

**VISTA'S** sailaway from her maiden visit to Valletta was marked by an historic cannon salute from the Saluting Battery which overlooks the Grand Harbour.

Water cannons were also deployed from local tugboats to commemorate the occasion, which followed last night's christening event.

Now sailing across the Mediterranean, *Vista* is set to arrive in Naples for a full day of activities and exploration.

Today some of those on board were treated to a behind-the-scenes glimpse of *Vista's* extensive galley which facilitates the creation of what Oceania describes as "The Finest Cuisine at Sea".

A cooking demonstration in the *Vista Lounge* was also very popular with guests, who during this special inaugural sailing are able to experience each one of the wide variety of specialty restaurants on board, including the new Ember and Aquamar Kitchen.

All of *Vista's* eateries are open to all without a surcharge.

## CLIA partners with TAFE



A **TRAINING** partnership between TAFE NSW and Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA) has been launched in response to the growing demand for job-ready professionals.

Aimed at helping students fast-track their careers, the program offers trainees the opportunity to fill the record highs of tourism job vacancies, many of which remain unfulfilled.

In a win-win situation for both students and the cruise sector, trainees will become qualified in a Certificate III in Travel or Certificate IV in Travel & Tourism, while securing immediate employment & gaining valuable experience, and providing the industry with much-needed new talent.

In addition to their qualification, trainees will work toward their CLIA accreditation, with access to the CLIA Learning Academy to supplement their development.

The first trainee in the program,

17-year-old Lindsay Campbell, has enjoyed on-the-job training as a Travel Assistant to Home-Based Agent of the Year Megan Catterall.

CLIA Managing Director Joel Katz said the traineeship program will offer a timely boost to the cruise sector.

"This traineeship allows our members to grow and redevelop their workforces in the short term while investing in a pipeline of talented bookings, customer service, and reservation agents," he said.

"Our membership body is comprised of over 60 leading cruise lines and thousands of travel agents, so we're excited to connect TAFE NSW students with potential employers."

**Pictured:** CLIA Head of International Training & Development Peter Kollar with Campbell and Catterall.

## Ponant package

**EXTENSIVE** savings are available through Cruise Traveller on a luxe Mediterranean voyage with Ponant featuring less-visited ports.

Cruise Traveller has combined two luxury voyages aboard a boutique Ponant ship next year to create a new package which unveils the beauty and charms of some of the Mediterranean's less-visited and more secluded islands and destinations.

The 18-night 'Gorgeous Greece & Malta' package in Jul 2024 features two back-to-back cruises aboard Ponant's 184-guest exploration ship *Le Bougainville*.

Guests board the ship in Piraeus for a journey to Nice via Italy and Malta.

On the cruise, *Le Bougainville* will call at Paros, Hydra, Monemvasia, Kythira, Pylos, Taormina, Valletta, Comino, Gozo, Lipari, Porto Ercole, Giglio, Portofino, and Calvi.

Savings of up to \$23,570 for couples and \$19,705 for solos are available for those who book by the end of next month.

A free night in an Athens hotel pre-cruise is also available for those booking by 30 Jun.

**CLICK HERE** to book.



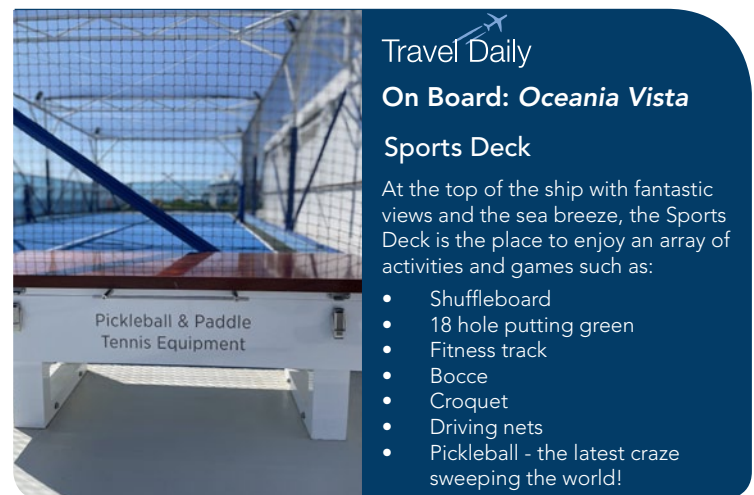
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Travel Daily

### On Board: Oceania Vista Sports Deck

At the top of the ship with fantastic views and the sea breeze, the Sports Deck is the place to enjoy an array of activities and games such as:

- Shuffleboard
- 18 hole putting green
- Fitness track
- Bocce
- Croquet
- Driving nets
- Pickleball - the latest craze sweeping the world!

Pickleball & Paddle Tennis Equipment





**SOME** people just can't keep away from the water - such as an Alabama man who was pulled over by police this week after being spotted with what has been described as a "boatercycle".

The police department in the town of Daphne posted about the incident, in which they were alerted via a 911 call about a man driving a jet ski on a local highway.

After being pulled over, officers checked out the unusual vehicle (**pictured**) and confirmed it had valid registration from another state and sent the rider on his way with a warning to get a helmet.

They posted about the traffic stop on the department's Facebook page, generating a host of feedback including a comment noting "obviously he's from out of state...if this was an Alabama resident he would be towing a cooler".

Local media noted that instructions to build such a vehicle can be found online at [www.jetdrift.com](http://www.jetdrift.com).



## Plug it in, Freddy



**FRED.** Olsen Cruise Lines has made its inaugural connection to shorepower during calls to Bergen and San Francisco.

*Borealis* became the first of Fred. Olsen's fleet to utilise shorepower by connecting during a transit call to San Francisco as part of her Around the World in 80 Days cruise on 17 Apr.

One week later, flagship *Bolette*

followed suit, by connecting to shorepower for seven hours on a call into Bergen in Norway.

During this time, the ship was able to utilise up to 27,000kw of renewable hydropower.

*Bolette* will connect again when she returns to Bergen on 23 May, with both ships to utilise any future connections when available in other ports of call.

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### ATE success

**ATE23** was a spectacular opportunity for CLIA and ACA to mount our first joint presence at this global gathering of retail and wholesale "buyers" alongside Australian "sellers".

This was another extension of the memorandum of understanding which was signed last year with Tourism Australia.

Joel Katz and I held 85 meetings over four days providing us with an important opportunity to discuss the vast extent of our cruise offerings in Australia.

While many of the buyers were across our expedition offerings, especially in the Kimberley region, we were able to provide them with a greater understanding of the range of cruise lines - from mainstream to luxury - that now call into Australia's gateways and regional ports.

They were also interested to know we hosted itineraries from two to 35 nights.

This gave us the opportunity to expound on the incredible range of shore excursions on offer for passengers including food & beverage, wildlife, nature, and Indigenous touring.

It was so encouraging to hear their interest in cruise and land packages which will extend their touring in Australia.

One of our members, Journey Beyond, is already developing more rail and sail opportunities.

In return, it was great to hear about the markets - the Chinese visitors are currently FIT travellers as group visas are not back yet.

This will help with planning, as it means more affluent travellers will be looking for luxury experiences.