



Cruise Weekly today

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

Cruise benefits spreading



EXCLUSIVE

THE benefits of the cruise sector to Australia's tourism industry go well beyond the country's coastline, Tourism Australia Chief Executive Officer Phillipa Harrison believes. Harrison heaped praise on the cruise sector on the sidelines of the Australian Tourism Exchange last week, saying it is a strong funnel for the visitor economy across the entire continent.

"The love for cruise in Australia is growing and while it is clearly booming for Aussies, we actually get hundreds of thousands of international visitors coming down and cruising our coastlines," Harrison told **CW**.

"While we have had a record cruise season and there are more ships here than ever been before, many people think the benefits are just coastal when actually it's not," she said.

"Cruise passengers do go into the centre [of Australia], sometimes with the cruise line and sometimes pre and post with tour groups."

Harrison said cruising can also get overseas arrivals into parts of Australia which are accommodation-constrained.

"We love cruising, we think it's fantastic that the industry is doing so well."

Meanwhile, Visit Victoria Chief Executive Officer Brendan McClements said despite some tribulations over port fees in Victoria, which prompted some lines to dump Melbourne as a cruise call, the state takes the sector "very seriously".

"Cruise is a great opportunity and an increasingly growing part of the market," he affirmed noting all states have faced challenges when trying to service the "incredible" growth witnessed in the sector.

McClements pointed to Sydney's own issues with finding somewhere suitable to build a second cruise terminal to ensure growth is not capped.

The Visit Victoria chief also suggested cruise will be important for future visitor dispersal strategies in the state.

"Increasing the opportunity in Victoria includes regional dispersal, because [cruise visitors] get up to the Mornington Peninsula and down to the Great Ocean Road...and we are always paying attention to those opportunities," he added.

Carnival Corp made the call last Nov for its Princess brand to cease home porting out of Melbourne, and for Cunard to skip Melbourne entirely, due to a hike in port fees. **AB**

Cunard carries the eternal flame

CUNARD Line's *Queen Mary 2* arrived in New York City last week carrying the eternal flame, in honour of the 80th anniversary of the World War II Normandy landings.

The flame was carried on a seven-day North Atlantic Crossing, and following *Queen Mary 2's* arrival, a commemorative ceremony was held on board the ship.

Those in attendance included Ambassador of France to the United States Laurent Bili; Acting Consul General of France in New York Damien Laban; Commissioner for International Affairs, City of New York Edward Mermelstein; *Queen Mary 2* Captain Andrew Hall; WWII veterans from The Greatest Generations Foundation; and the granddaughter of general George Patton.

The eternal flame has been burning since 11 Nov 1923 on the tomb of the Unknown Soldier under the Arc de Triomphe in Paris.

The ambassadors escorted the flame to Arlington National Cemetery in Virginia to lay it down at an official ceremony on 24 May, where it will burn until 06 Jun.

"We are honoured that our flagship *Queen Mary 2* was part of this historic occasion honouring the men and women who served in D-Day, and the many hundreds of thousands of whom were brought over the Atlantic on Cunard ships," Hall said.

"Today will truly be remembered as an important part of Cunard's long and storied history."

Explora partnership

EXPLORA Journeys has announced a global partnership with the 37th America's Cup, a sailing competition which will be raced from 12-20 Oct.

The Cup is claimed to be the oldest continuous competition in international sport, and is set to take place this year in Barcelona, with New Zealand taking on the United Kingdom.

"Our collaboration with the America's Cup pays homage to a shared seafaring history of challenge and achievement," MSC Group Cruise Exec Chair Cruise Pierfrancesco Vago said.

"This partnership embodies our commitment to excellence," he said.

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WATCH out cruise industry - Vessev has launched the world's first premium tourism electric hydrofoiling vessel, which will "unlock entirely new opportunities in marine passenger transport".

Vessev has partnered with New Zealand-based ferry operator Fullers360 for the VS-9 to become the first fully electric passenger vessel to operate in Auckland.

She will also be the first hydrofoiling tourism vessel to operate in the world.

The state-of-the-art vessel is currently undergoing sea trials, and is aiming to be certified this year, after which it will enter commercial operation with Fullers360.



Incident on Icon

A PASSENGER has reportedly gone overboard from Royal Caribbean International's new *Icon of the Seas*, according to reports from the ship.

Passengers on board the seven-night sailing reported the fall on social media, which reported occurred during a day at sea.

MSC new kids program

MSC Cruises has unveiled exciting innovations for families this northern summer, expanding its kids club hours and introducing new activities for guests of all ages.

The cruise line will offer a dedicated baby care service for children aged six months and up.

The service previously only catered to those 12 months or over, and gives parents more freedom to enjoy the ship.

It is offered in collaboration with Chicco, a long-term MSC partner, which means all youth staff on board the ships are prepared to meet needs of babies between six months and two years.

Parents who still want to spend some quality time with their kids on board in the kids club will also have the opportunity to do so.

Each day a time slot will be reserved when all Doremiland areas will be open, and there will also be a big family party for parents and kids to play together each cruise.

Club hours have also been extended for young guests aged 12-17, who will be able to enjoy it every sea day from 10am to 1pm and from 3pm to midnight.

The club will also be open every port day from 3pm to midnight.

New family game shows and quizzes are available as part of the family program, with updated offerings including World Quest, a geography-based trivia game; Caravaggio, a spy game show dedicated to art; and Guinness World Record activities, which will offer families the chance to win prizes on board on nine of the cruise line's ships, including



MSC World Europa.

Families will also have the opportunity to take part in exclusive children's activities every day, carried out in collaboration with the MSC Foundation and its long-term partners to learn more about marine conservation initiatives.

Other popular favourites returning to the MSC fleet this summer include Lego Experience On Board, the Break the Wall and Cabin 12006 game shows, the Doremiland documentary, MSC Dance Crew, MasterChef at Sea Juniors, and more.

"At the heart of our business is family...we love creating unforgettable memories and holidays for everyone, especially for families," said Global Head of Entertainment Steve Leatham.

"That's why we proudly offer a fleetwide family program of entertainment and activities that resonates with our valued guests.

"As a father of three boys, I know first-hand the incredible job our youth team does on board, not only in entertaining children and families but also in creating moments that can't be replicated anywhere else." MS

Pictured: *MSC World Europa* Baby Club.

CLIA seeks skills

CRUISE Lines International Association (CLIA) has published a new skills and workforce publication, *An Ocean of Opportunities*, which highlights the employment opportunities cruise tourism supports around the world.

There are vast opportunities for careers in cruise, with almost 60 new ships coming online between 2024 and 2028, and the sector boasting an impressive employee retention rate upwards of 80%.

Cruise lines will employ a workforce of nearly 300,000 seafarers representing more than 150 countries this year, as well as tens of thousands of employees on land, with those with "green skills" in need around the sector.

CLICK HERE to view *An Ocean of Opportunities*.

A tuneful voyage

NEW Zealand composer, singer and multi-instrumentalist Don McGlashan is set to join an Antarctic voyage with Heritage Expeditions, 'In the Wake of Scott & Shackleton'.

The cruise will sail into the "heart of Antarctica" in Jan 2026 as part of Heritage's ongoing support of the Arts Foundation, which will see the line donate a stateroom on the same trip to the Arts Foundation Digital Auction.

Commercial Director & Expedition Leader Aaron Russ said Heritage is honoured to be welcoming Don on board.