



Ponant passes up on Paspaley Pearl

THE planned partnership between expedition cruise line Ponant and Paspaley Pearl will no longer proceed, with the highly touted luxury yacht experience north of Australia now cancelled.

A statement issued by Ponant Asia-Pacific CEO Deb Corbett confirmed the news which has already been shared with affected travel agent partners.

“Ponant regrets to inform its valued customers and travel partners that the proposed cruise program to operate on Paspaley Pearl is not proceeding with Ponant as the cruise operator.

“However, Ponant remains dedicated to exploring the Kimberley, Australia’s Far North, Papua New Guinea and East Indonesia, with over 40 explorations on Ponant’s *Le Soleal* and *Le Jacques Cartier* over the next two years,” it continued.

A statement from Paspaley



Pearl sourced by **Cruise Weekly** said the company was “very disappointed to learn that the upcoming voyages on the *Paspaley Pearl*, operated by Ponant have been cancelled.

“We do not have any further details at this time.”

A dedicated website promoting Paspaley Pearl by Ponant has been taken offline and replaced with a message that includes: “To discuss alternate Ponant itineraries and experiences, please call 1300 737 178 to speak to one of our cruise consultants or visit au.ponant.com.”

In her statement, Corbett said

affected agents are being looked after, with commissions protected and clients offered the option of either a full refund or an additional saving to rebook onto another sailing across Ponant’s global fleet of 13 ships.

“Guests holding reservations have been advised that they will receive a full refund or alternatively, guests can receive a travel credit with an additional 15% saving to choose a cruise on Ponant’s fleet across the globe, which is combinable with the Ponant Bonus Savings and Ponant Yacht Club benefits for members of the club,” Corbett said.

Affected travellers have until 31 Dec 2025 to make their decision.

Travellers looking to maintain their Kimberley expedition with Ponant are being accommodated on numerous departures operated by Ponant’s *Le Soleal* and *Le Jacques Cartier*. ML

Cruise Weekly today

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

Extension cancelled

CROOKED Compass Founder Lisa Pagotto says she received no further information why her land and sea itinerary involving *Paspaley Pearl* was cancelled.

Speaking to **CW**, Pagotto said she received a phone call advising the deployment has been cancelled but was not provided with any additional detail on the change.

Pagotto’s tour brand recently unveiled a new 16-day tour in Papua New Guinea (**CW** 16 Oct), which featured a land segment followed by an expedition on *Paspaley Pearl*.

The sailing was not a charter, with Crooked Compass offering an optional land extension to a scheduled departure.

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Williams is gone

STEWART Williams, long-time Celestyal Cruises Regional Manager, has departed the company, as announced to trade partners (**CW** breaking new yesterday).

Williams led Celestyal in Australia for just over six years, with the cruise line thanking him for his contributions.

Celestyal told trade partners it will continue to support them, as the line finalises its new local structure.

“Our team is dedicated to maintaining the high standards you expect from us, and we appreciate your patience during this transition period.”

Williams’ departure leaves Business Development Manager Mary Williams as Celestyal Cruises’ sole Australian employee, with trade partners encouraged to contact her for all needs.

Seward grant to be put to good use

SEWARD has outlined big plans for a US\$47.5 million grant to connect calling cruise ships to shore power (**CW** 01 Oct).

The project is hoped to be completed by the end of 2026, reducing fossil fuel emissions, and making Seward (**pictured**) the second Alaskan city after Juneau to install shore power.

The federally funded project will also lower electricity costs for ratepayers, in a state whose cruise industry has come under scrutiny of late (**CW** 21 Oct).

The grant covers 90% of the cost of the project, with the rest to be funded by real estate developer The Seward Company, as well as Royal Caribbean Group as part of a major regional investment.

“This will be the most advanced shore power system to ever be installed in Alaska,” said Jason Davis, President of infrastructure development company Turnagain.



“For a community this size, the system will constantly analyse and store power, saving energy and money for the City of Seward, all while making it a better place to visit and live.”

Seward City Manager Kat Sorensen described the grant as a “game changer”.

“It allows the city to implement shore power technology that will

drastically reduce emissions from cruise ships in our coastal Alaska community,” she said.

“The strong collaboration that our community has with the Royal Caribbean Group has allowed this project to progress with an intentional focus on our community’s needs as it supports visitors to Seward for years to come,” Sorensen added. *MS*

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Nominations are now open for the 22nd Annual Cruise Industry Awards

Nominate yourself or a colleague today

For more information on Award Criteria and how to nominate, please visit cruising.org.au.
Nominations are open to all CLIA Travel Agent members and close Friday, 29 November 2024.



P&O's perfect partnership



ROYAL Caribbean's Reddit thread has been highly active lately as cruise fans speculate the possible names of its two upcoming Icon-class ships.

Of course, we know about *Icon of the Seas* and *Star of the Seas*, but what will be the names of the next two?

Some suggestions from the social media masses have been more serious such as *Imperial of the Seas*, *Serenity of the Seas* or *Triumph of the Seas*.

Then there are the more entertaining ones such as *Emoji of the Seas*, *Shortcut of the Seas* and even *Boaty McBoatface of the Seas* - of course.

Other humorous suggestions include *Elevator Wait of the Seas*, *Prepaid Gratuity of the Seas*, *The Bees Knees of the Seas*, *Washy Washy of the Seas*, *Ginormous of the Seas* and even *Titanic of the Seas*.

P&O Cruises has been taking passengers to the Melbourne Cup for many years, but yesterday the line took its involvement up a notch by playing an integral part in the winning jockey's victory.

According to an Instagram story, race-winning jockey Robbie Dolan met horse trainer Sheila Laxon onboard P&O Cruises' annual journey to the race two years ago.

Laxon was in need of a rider for one of her stallions, a horse known as Knight's Choice.

As the story goes, Dolan knew Laxon when he saw her and was more than a little starstruck.

"She was there, and I thought, 'wow, it's Sheila Laxon - I'd better grab a selfie,'" he recalled.

The connection was made then and there and ended up sparking the formula which led to a win in the 'race that stops the nation'.

"Now, three years later, who'd have thought we'd win a Melbourne Cup together?" Dolan continued in his now-famous tale.

P&O Cruises' annual journey to the Melbourne Cup has featured a lineage of legendary identities from the 'sport of kings' and this week's sailing was no exception.

Onboard this year were three Melbourne Cup-winning jockeys including Peter Cook, Jim Cassidy and Corey Brown, the trio holding five wins between them and thousands of total race wins across Australia and the world.

Next year, Carnival Cruise Line will continue the Melbourne Cup pilgrimage, with *Carnival Adventure* and *Carnival Splendor* to provide nearly 10% of the event's total attendance.

It may be the perfect way to cap 90 years of creating memories for million of cruise travellers as the brand prepares to wind down. *ML*



Celebrating ACA members

NOT only has cruise season commenced, but awards season is also now upon us.

We are delighted to see so many of our ACA members being recognised for tourism excellence across the country.

I would like to take this opportunity to celebrate their efforts as they play a critical part in our greater ACA community, which makes our industry the success that it is today.

Starting with the SA Tourism Awards held last weekend, congratulations to Port Lincoln Visitor Information Centre and Sealink - The Murray Princess for taking home gold in their respective categories.

With many of our members announced as finalists for their upcoming state and territory awards presentations (with Queensland and the Northern Territory finalists yet to be announced), we look forward to celebrating more wins in the coming weeks.

Finalists include Captain Cook Cruises (Sydney) and Cruise Eden for NSW; City of Greater Geelong for Victoria; Sealink WA for Western Australia; and Port Arthur Historic Site for Tasmania.

We would also like to congratulate Viking Cruises for taking out the most popular ocean cruise operator category at the NTIAs last week.

Well done to all the finalists and winners for the recognition of their tireless work for our industry.



On Board: *Celebrity Edge* Magic Carpet

This bar-restaurant hosts some of the best views at sea, as *Celebrity Edge* passengers are suspended over the side of the ship on a glass-sheltered platform. It is the world's first contraption of its kind, hanging passengers up to 14 decks above the water while they enjoy a glass or two, or a nibble. *Edge* by name, *Edge* by nature!



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