



Cruise Weekly today

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

Associates on tour

TRAVEL Associates is taking its Luxury Cruise Showcase on tour around the country, with events scheduled in five cities across Sep and Oct.

Luxury seekers on the Gold Coast, Auckland, Newcastle, Adelaide and Melbourne will all gain access to special offers and expertise from many of the world's high-end brands who can help craft a dream cruise holiday itinerary.

Each event is customised to the city and builds on a major promotion hosted by Travel Associates last month when it took over Sydney's Overseas Passenger Terminal.

[CLICK HERE](#) for more details.

TM rolling out Fastbook

EXCLUSIVE

TRAVELMANAGERS (TM) is rolling out Fastbook, its own in-house cruise wholesaler, House of Travel General Manager Cruise, Jeff Leckey, has told *CW*.

Fastbook represents TravelManagers' expanding cruise offering, underpinned by technology, with 32 live APIs hosted on the platform.

The new wholesaler features live 24/7 availability, and is also integrated with Tramada, meaning a seamless back office experience for TravelManagers' personal travel managers (PTMs).

Fastbook was tested with a pilot group of travel advisors in Jun, and it has since been rolled out to the wider network, with all PTMs now able to access the software.

Leckey, who spoke to *CW* on the sidelines of this year's annual TravelManagers conference, said the uptake of Fastbook has far

exceeded in-house expectations.

The wholesaler aims to help the company's PTMs "work smarter" rather than harder - the theme for this year's conference.

"As a group, we love technology, so finding a way to work smarter with tech is always a good thing for us," he said.

"We were able to reduce the amount of clicks required to get from availability to booking - that sort of stuff, the PTMs have told us is important."

Fastbook is now in the hands of TravelManagers Cruise Product Manager, Lia Malone, who has completed state-by-state training of the system, and will help PTMs with its implementation.

"[We have] our own wholesale cruise operation our own PTMs are using, that's all recognised as TravelManagers volume, as opposed to buying it over the market," Leckey added. *MS*



On location in Dongtou

Today's issue of *Cruise Weekly* is coming to you from China courtesy of Viking.

PART of a 168-island archipelago in the East China Sea, Dongtou is another rarely visited coastal destination being opened up by Viking's new China Discovery itinerary.

Guests will experience the ancient Wanghai Tower which dominates the bay, tracing more than 1,500 years of history, as well as the Zhong Putuo Temple, part of a Qing dynasty Buddhist complex.

Also on offer is a Sea Mud Pottery experience.

Tomorrow we cruise onto Pingtan and then Xiamen before a day at sea on Mon.



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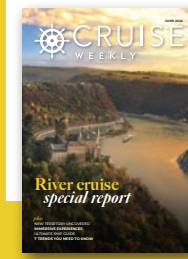


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NSW Govt says no way to Jervis Bay

THE expansion of the cruise industry in Jervis Bay Marine Park on New South Wales' South Coast was ruled out by the state's government yesterday.

New South Wales Minister for the Environment Penny Sharpe joined Member for the South Coast Liza Butler in Huskisson, on the shore of Jervis Bay (pictured), to meet members of the community who have campaigned to protect the Marine Park, and confirmed there will be no expansion of cruise tourism in the region.

"Following strong advocacy from the South Coast community, the NSW Government has made the decision to rule out any plans to make the Jervis Bay Marine Park a port for cruise ships," Sharpe explained.

"The risk of environmental damage is just too high, and we thank locals for their many years



of campaigning to protect this marine wonder."

Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA) clarified any past examination of Jervis Bay as a port of call was made as part of broader studies of cruising in New South Wales, and not at the request of the sector.

"The cruise industry is dedicated to operating in ways that respect local communities and protect the natural environment in the destinations we visit," CLIA said.

"Jervis Bay has not been a priority for the cruise industry,

and it is important to clarify that CLIA has not sought ongoing access to the Jervis Bay Marine Park on behalf of cruise lines."

Philip Holliday, CEO of the Port Authority of New South Wales, and Chair of the ACA, has also in the past maintained Jervis Bay has not been, and never will be, considered as a location for a terminal (CW 01 Sep 2023).

The former state government did not rule out cruise ships anchoring in Jervis Bay (CW 02 Mar 2022), after several lines mooted calls in the region. MS

Cruise = big savings

AUSTRALIAN travellers can save \$100 or more per day on the cost of a holiday by choosing a cruise instead of a traditional on-land getaway, according to analysis by Money.com.au.

The comparison looked at the cost of cruises (including meals, entertainment, and more) for two travellers from Australia to three popular destinations versus equivalent traditional holidays, with some cruises offering a saving of more than \$250 per day.

Money.com.au representative Sean Callery concluded the cost benefits of cruising come from the holiday's all-inclusive nature.

"On-land vacations offer more flexibility but tend to be more expensive because these costs are typically separate and can quickly add up."



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For more information visit - www.travelindustrymentor.com.au



Stay Updated

on the latest cruise news

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ROYAL Caribbean has just wrapped up what is being described as an adventure of a lifetime, with hundreds of travellers disembarking from the line's maiden and eventful 274-day world cruise.

Serenade of the Seas departed from Miami on 10 Dec last year and embarked on an itinerary that included 60 countries on six continents.

The ship was rerouted due to the ongoing Red Sea hostilities and at one point even mildly flooded after it was hit by a major storm in South America during just its second week.

Some passengers even took to social media to express their concern as wine supplies began to run low.

Travellers paid US\$53,000 and up for the entire journey, so now the only question left is whether Royal Caribbean will want to do it again.

Triple celebration for Explora



EXPLORA Journeys has staged a triple celebration, highlighted by the delivery of the cruise line's second ship *Explora II* (pictured) at the Fincantieri shipyard.

The cruise line also laid the keel of its third ship *Explora III* today, conducting the ship's traditional coin ceremony, while the first steel has also now been cut for its fourth ship, *Explora IV*.

The triple celebration marks a key milestone as Explora Journeys continues to grow toward a total of six ships by 2028.

Explora II will set sail on her maiden journey on 16 Sep from Civitavecchia to Sicily, Malta, and Spain, with MSC Group Cruise Division Executive Chair Pierfrancesco Vago in attendance for the ship's delivery.

Also present was *Explora II*'s godmother Stefania Vago, as well as Fincantieri Chair, Biagio Mazzotta, along with representatives of the construction team, together with workers from the shipyard.

Explora II will operate in the Caribbean Sea in the winter and return to the Mediterranean for summer 2025.

Also taking place today was the keel-laying ceremony for *Explora III*, which saw commemorative coins placed inside the ship's hull as a sign of blessing during construction and good fortune in the future.

Overseeing the ceremony were *Explora II*'s two godmothers, Explora Global Head of Public Relations, Verena Koetzle, and Fincantieri Shipyard Sestri Ponente Public Area Supervisor, Martina Giardina.

The liquefied natural gas-powered *Explora III* will enter service in 2026.

The cruise line's third celebration was a steel cutting ceremony to mark the start of construction of *Explora IV*, which will also be fuelled by LNG, and will be completed in early 2027.

The upcoming *Explora V* will join the luxury fleet in 2027. *MS*

Cruise Calendar

Current ports of call in Australia and New Zealand.

SYDNEY	<i>Carnival Splendor</i>	18 Sep
BRISBANE	<i>Pacific Encounter</i>	14 Sep
CAIRNS	<i>Carnival Splendor</i>	14 Sep
THURSDAY ISLAND	<i>Silver Cloud</i>	15 Sep
DARWIN	<i>Le Jacques Cartier</i>	18 Sep
	<i>Scenic Eclipse II</i>	19 Sep
BROOME	<i>True North II</i>	13 Sep
	<i>Coral Discoverer</i>	16 Sep
	<i>True North</i>	17 Sep
GERALDTON	<i>Coral Princess</i>	14 Sep
FREMANTLE	<i>Coral Princess</i>	15 Sep

Virgin weddings

VIRGIN Voyages has announced cruisers can now book a wedding at sea, starting in Apr.

The cruise line will be offering three wedding packages for those celebrating their engagement, wedding, honeymoon, or vow renewal.

Full details of the packages are still to come, but those interested can apply [HERE](#).

Meyer Werft rescue

GERMANY'S national government and the state of Lower Saxony will each take 40% stakes in shipbuilding firm Meyer Werft as part of a financial bailout (*CW* 26 Aug).

The €200 million (A\$329m) deal will also see the two governments guarantee 80% of a €2.6 billion debt capital credit line, with banks assuming the remaining 20%.

Meyer Werft employs around 3,300 people and has an extensive order book of cruise ships including four new ships coming to Disney Cruise Line.