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### C360 special edition

THIS special issue of *Cruise Weekly* features five pages of all the news, a front cover from **Celebrity Cruises** and updates from this week's Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA) Cruise360 2025 conference in Brisbane, plus full pages from:

- **Crystal Cruises**
- **Regent Seven Seas Cruises**
- **Oceania Cruises**

### Nothing comes close

**LEARN** how clients can experience the best of Europe with Celebrity Cruises by heading to the **cover page**.

### Sell three, sail free

**AGENTS** can sail free with Crystal, thanks to the cruise line's latest incentive.

See **page six** for details.

## Cruise360 Brisbane biggest ever for CLIA

**CRUISE** Line International Association Australasia (CLIA) has recorded its highest-ever attendance figures for Cruise360 at this year's event in Brisbane.

More than 850 delegates attended the conference at the Royal International Convention Centre, the same location where it took place two years ago, when the event first landed in the city.

Visit Qatar was the headline sponsor for the conference, which also served as the 10th birthday of the annual event.

"We have more than 850 people here today, in fact, the biggest cruise gathering we've ever had in Australasia, so we can safely say our CLIA community is stronger and more dedicated than ever before, and I thank you for your involvement," Joel Katz, Managing Director of CLIA Australasia said.

"Right now, our membership



in Australasia is at record levels - close to 7,000 travel agents across Australia and New Zealand, spanning the largest of the agency groups through to the most dedicated of home-based individuals," he added.

Attending was CLIA Global President & Chief Executive Officer Bud Darr, who was visiting Australia for the first time.

In addition to Darr, 10 other international executives spoke at

the conference.

Katz pointed out that "this summer we will host a total of 63 cruise ships in local waters between Oct and Apr", suggesting the cruise industry in Australasia has much to celebrate, despite some trickier waters to navigate over the last year. *DF*

**Pictured:** CLIA Australasia Chair Peter Little with President & CEO Bud Darr and Australasia Managing Director Joel Katz.

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## Combine and save

**TRAVELLERS** can save 30% with Regent Seven Sea Cruises' newest Combine & Save Offer.

The deal ends 31 Aug - see **page seven** for all the details, and to download the toolkit.

## Save with Oceania

**OCEANIA** Cruises is showcasing its latest promotion, which offers a discount of up to \$11,600 on select sailings.

Find out more on **page eight**.

## 2026 event locked in

**CRUISE360** will return to Sydney next year, bringing the extended two-day format to the city for the first time.

Next year's conference will be hosted on 17 and 18 Sep at ICC Sydney.

# Art of upselling revealed by MSC sales boss

**IN A** candid fireside chat with *Cruise Weekly* on stage at Cruise360, MSC Vice President of International Sales, Antonio Paradiso (**pictured right**), revealed the secrets to upselling and cross-selling - and also suggested many travel advisors could be missing a trick.

Speaking in front of a full house at the Royal International Convention Centre, Paradiso shared what advisors should do while Australians' intent to cruise is high and bookings are getting further in advance.

"Cross-selling and upselling give you a great return on your investments - you have invested time in making the initial sale, so you have already built a trust with the customer," he said.

"The customer will listen to your recommendation, but unfortunately I still believe that many travel agents miss the trick,



so they just stick with the initial sale," Paradiso added.

The Geneva- and London-based cruise executive, who has been with MSC since 2008, urged advisors to approach their clients with simplicity - just two or three key messages - rather than bombarding them with too many upgrade options.

"You need to understand what your customer is actually looking for, and please keep it simple," Paradiso said.

With Australians booking so

far in advance, the MSC chief touched on when the ideal time is to start discussing upgrades with them.

"They're open after a month or two to start upgrading their experience, to start adding more value to their experience.

"It's typical of English-speaking markets... they just want to know that everything's already paid."

Paradiso reinforced that even when passengers had prepaid for extras, they are willing to spend on board. *DF*



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## Pile calls for air help

**REGENT** Seven Seas Cruises (RSSC) VP Lisa Pile urged airlines to step up and support the cruise industry during Cruise360 earlier this week.

"I think we need pressure on our airline partners because we need more inventory, we rely on air," Pile said.

"We have got a lot of work to do in the airline industry.

"So please, if you're speaking to your local airline direct, we need more seats."

The RSSC executive also encouraged travel advisors to step up by showing up to trade events.

"We invest a lot of money in events, we need your support, and believe it or not, most of the clients who turn up to events are not working with a travel adviser," Pile said.

"So please turn up to events and support your cruise line."

## Opportunity abounds in fly-cruise

**THE** upward trend around fly-cruising is providing significant opportunity for travel advisors, driven by a younger demographic, according to Royal Caribbean Vice President & Managing Director Gavin Smith.

On a panel (pictured) moderated by **Cruise Weekly**, Smith was joined by Carnival Corporation Senior Vice President & Country Manager Peter Little, Norwegian Cruise Line Vice President & Managing Director APAC Ben Angell, Ponant Explorations Chief Executive Officer APAC Deb Corbett and Regent Seven Seas Cruises Vice President Sales & General Manager APAC Lisa Pile.

Smith spoke enthusiastically about the modernising of the traditional "grand tour".

"If airfares stay in that \$1,000 to \$2,000 price bracket, then it's not hard to go to Europe for



10 or 12 days, so I think we are modernising our view of these kinds of 25-day grand tours that happen once or twice in a lifetime," he exclaimed.

"This younger crowd are better able to travel and are more demanding [of] experiences."

Angell added, "the greatest opportunity is the fly-cruise opportunity - typically we might send 1.2-1.3 million guests on cruises per year in this part of the

world, but only about 200,000 of those get on an airplane and fly relatively long distances...to cruise on products in other parts of the world".

"I would love to see that number double or triple," he added, calling it an uncapped opportunity for the travel trade.

The panel generally agreed that domestic cruise had opened up interest and opportunity that could now be capitalised on. *DF*

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Friday 29th August 2025

**THIS** week's Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA) Cruise360 conference boasted some of the richest international talent on display in the event's history.

Headlining the group on his first trip to Australia was new CLIA President & Chief Executive Officer Bud Darr, who committed to frequent visits Down Under during his oversight of the organisation.

Another popular speaker was Celebrity Cruises Vice President International Giles Hawke, who narrated the opportunity provided by fly-cruising.

Much-loved Regent Seven Seas Cruises Senior Vice President International & Consumer Sales Steve Odell was also back in Australia, on what was the 10th anniversary of his opening of the country's NCLH office.



**THE** Cunard Line team welcomed Senior Vice President Commercial Liz Fettes (centre) from the United States.



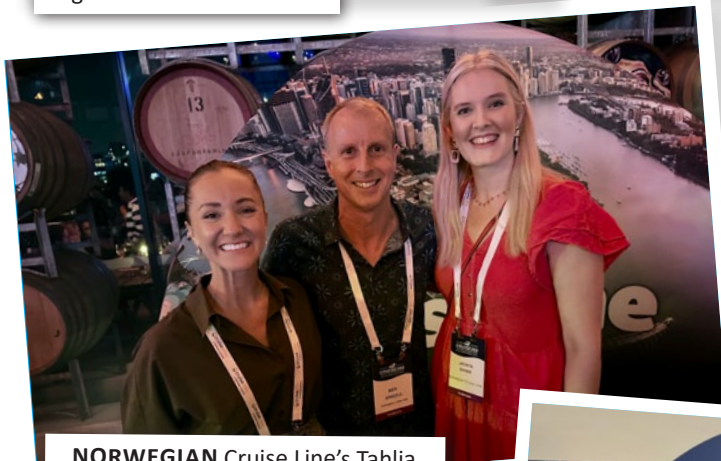
**STEVE** Odell and Lisa Pile, Regent Seven Seas Cruises.



**THE** AmaWaterways team: Managing Director Steve Richards, founder Kristin Karst, and Head of Marketing Angela Smith.



**APT'S** Madison Baier and Karen Newbury.



**NORWEGIAN** Cruise Line's Tahlia Shaw, Ben Angell, and Jacinta Baker.



**THE** Crystal Cruises team in their "day two blue".



**MSC** Marketing & PR Manager Michelle Warren and Vice President International Sales Antonio Paradiso.



**THE** Norwegian Cruise Line Holdings team cuts the cake on its 10th anniversary in Australia.



**THE** Uniworld team with *Ganges Voyager II* Cruise Director Arjun Sinsinwar.





**CRUISE360** is an early Christmas for the cruise industry, with an arms race breaking out each year to see who can unveil the most impressive trade stall.

One of the most popular was the (benevolent) Helloworld photo-taking robot, which was under the command of Cruise Product Manager Kevin Johns.

Points should also go to APT and its roulette table, with Madison Baier and Karen Newbury inviting attendees to “not gamble with their clients’ money” and choose the river cruise leaders.

Very popular was Virgin Voyages, and its evolving array of ice cream - **Cruise Weekly’s** favourite was the sorbet.

However arguably one of the most impressive was Royal Caribbean’s art wall, painted by a hand-picked graffiti artist, whose work was then printed onto a tote (pictured) for attendees to take home.



## CLIA rollin’ on the river



**A PANEL** of five river cruise experts busted some key myths surrounding the sector at this week’s Cruise360.

Tauck Managing Director David Clark, Avalon Waterways Head of Commercial Brett Simon, Uniworld Boutique River Cruises Managing Director Alice Ager, APT Chief Sales Officer Scott Ellis, and Scenic Group Director Sales & Agent Programs Robert Kalembe all took on some of the tougher retorts to river cruising, in a panel moderated by Australian Travel Industry Association Director of Membership & Industry Affairs Richard Taylor.

Attendees heard how the typically slower-placed sector also provides plenty of opportunity for explorers, with Simon emphasising the breadth of experiences available on a river cruise.

“I’d done Vietnam and Cambodia three times before I did a Mekong cruise, and I saw 80% more than I ever did [on land],” he explained.

“The only way to access some of these towns is through rivers, so some of these cruises would be better suited from a spontaneity point of view,” he added. *MS*

### Travel advisors key

**TRAVEL** advisors are key when it comes to communicating value and uniqueness of the cruise experience and destinations.

That was the sentiment shared by Windstar’s new Managing Director Helen Beck in a session at Cruise360, discussing how the global geopolitical landscape is shaping cruise itineraries.

“At least 80- 90% of our business is coming through the travel partner community - so thank you” Beck said, to resounding applause.

“You are such a huge and important channel for us... even with all the difficulties you have globally, you are so important,” she added.

### Training goes global

**CRUISE** Lines International Association (CLIA) has revealed it is moving to a new global training platform next year.

The association’s Head of International Training & Development Peter Kollar told attendees at Cruise360 that even though the courses will have their own nuances for each region, CLIA will collaborate with international offices to create further resources that can be shared between countries.

The refreshed platform, which CLIA will work on over the next six to 12 months, will also boast an improved user interface, more functionality, and easier navigation.

During his speech, Kollar also informed the audience that CLIA had achieved a record 2,314 certified agents, with 57% who are credited, 23% who are ambassadors, and 20% who are masters.

Additionally, around 54,000 courses have been completed over CLIA’s 16-year history.

The last two-and-a-half-years have seen tremendous growth in particular, Kollar said, with the same amount of course completions achieved during this period than the 16 years accumulated prior.

“I want to thank you for the record numbers that we are currently producing...it just shows you how engaged we are, and this is just the start.

“I’m really looking forward to what we can deliver further, and that comes from your voice as well,” Kollar added.

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