

Cruise Weekly today

Cruise Weekly today features three pages of all the latest cruise news, plus a full page from Silversea.

No Drake shake

SILVERSEA is today promoting its Antarctica fly-cruises, with the line offering a direct connection to your clients' expedition.

Guests embarking on an Antarctica fly-cruise from Jan will begin their itinerary at Silversea's new hotel, The Cormorant at 55 South (CW 17 Apr), the farthest-south accommodation in the world.

Passengers can then skip the Drake Passage and fly directly to Antarctica.

The new itinerary means passengers with gentler stomachs will be able to avoid the dreaded 'Drake shake' - more information on [page 4](#).

Celebrity confirms sailings to Lelepa

EXCLUSIVE

CELEBRITY Cruises VP International Giles Hawke (pictured) has confirmed the line will visit the Lelepa private destination in Vanuatu, currently in development by its sister brand Royal Caribbean, **CW** can exclusively reveal.

Hawke said some of the line's best feedback is for its calls at Perfect Day at CocoCay - another Royal Caribbean private destination that Celebrity has only recently begun sailing to (CW 23 Jun 2023).

Lelepa is scheduled to arrive in 2027 (CW 04 Jun), with the cruise line's *Celebrity Edge* and the recently renovated *Celebrity Solstice* scheduled to sail in Australia during the season.

"We'll go to Lelepa when it opens," Hawke confirmed.

"If we're in that region of the world, then it would make sense



for us to go there, the same way we go to Perfect Day."

Royal Caribbean will be prioritised in visiting Lelepa, Hawke clarified, as the main patrons of the destination.

The cruise line's CEO Michael Bayley recently confirmed to **CW** it will visit the private destination on almost all of its Australian

itineraries (CW 18 Aug).

Celebrity, like Royal Caribbean (CW 19 Aug), is also beginning to pursue a shorter itinerary strategy in order to further tempt new-to-cruise passengers onto its ships (CW 28 Jun 2024).

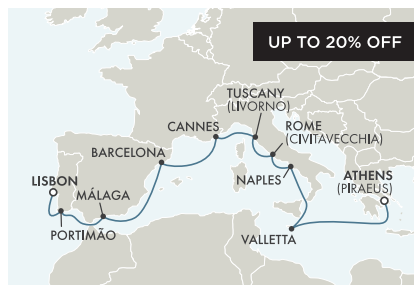
However Australians are still continuing to book longer with Celebrity, Hawke confirmed. *MS*



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Cruiseabout NSW

EXCLUSIVE

FLIGHT Centre Travel Group (FCTG) will open its second Cruiseabout location in New South Wales this Dec in the Sydney suburb of St. Ives.

Cruiseabout General Manager Brad Kennedy confirmed the news to **Cruise Weekly**, adding there will be more stores to come in Sydney and Melbourne before the end of the financial year.

The cruise retail brand opened its first NSW location earlier this year when it cut the ribbon on Cruiseabout Narellan (**CW** 07 Mar).

The brand is one of FCTG's star performers, called out in the company's annual report for its "solid" contribution to TTV (**CW** 27 Aug).

FCTG also flagged an incoming loyalty program for the Cruiseabout brand.

Tourism Australia has eyes on cruise

TOURISM Australia is working with the local cruise sector to increase the destination's inbound numbers and grow the industry Down Under.

Executive General Manager Industry Sally Cope, speaking at last week's Australian Cruise Association (ACA) conference in Fremantle (**CW** yesterday), said Tourism Australia will continue to promote the sector overseas, following the re-signing of a Memorandum of Understanding with the industry (**CW** 08 Sep).

The agreement, which was announced at the conference, will see Tourism Australia work with the ACA and Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA).

"We actively promote the breadth and depth of experiences available [in Australian cruise], and focus on growing the overnight expenditure around cruise," Cope explained.



"We do this by talking to people who already love cruise and getting them to consider Australia," she added.

"Ideally we're seeking dispersal throughout the country, which obviously cruise can facilitate."

Cope said Tourism Australia focuses on the distribution and dispersal of cruise with some of

the nation's peak travel consortia.

"A large component of this is the agent training, not to forget the Aussie Specialist training program, which has a specific cruise module," she said. **MS**

Pictured are ACA Chief Executive Officer Jill Abel, Sally Cope, and CLIA Managing Director Joel Katz.



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SOME travellers are so desperate for a cruise that one woman allegedly used GoFundMe donations to pay for her sailing.

The American woman is accused of diverting more than US\$40k raised for her injured family member's recovery to fund her own expenses, which included a sailing with Carnival Cruise Line.

The US\$6,200 voyage is part of more than US\$37,000 the woman allegedly stole.

Fundell Strativates

EXCLUSIVE

FORMER APAC Head of Marketing for Globus family of brands (GFOB) including Avalon Waterways, Chris Fundell, has revealed his next move after leaving the business recently.

The experienced marketer has launched Strativate Marketing, which aims to deliver high-impact marketing leadership and strategy to the tourism industry without the overhead of a full-time chief marketing officer.

Fundell lists the services of the business as spanning fractional CMO leadership, strategic planning, growth identification, and full delivery through top-tier internal and external resources.

Aqua new loyalty program



AQUA Expeditions has launched its 'Circolo Aqua' loyalty program, a global platform that will reward guests, top-performing advisors, and partner companies with exclusive, miles-based benefits.

Circolo Aqua offers exclusive, tier-based rewards in the form of miles, with bookings from the start of the year to retroactively benefit from the new platform.

The Trade Loyalty program will officially debut during the upcoming Pure Marrakech travel show, with the first rewards to be issued in Jan, based on total production from the 2025 calendar year.

Tier placement is calculated from gross revenue for individual advisors and net revenue for partner agencies.

All rewards are issued in miles, which partners can redeem toward future Aqua bookings.

Individual travel advisors will receive travel vouchers, issued each Jan, which will be valid for two years.

The advisor must personally travel on the booking, though the

voucher may cover other guests.

Vouchers are non-transferable, not combinable with promotions, and limited to two per booking.

Meanwhile, partner companies can earn back end commission credit, also issued in Jan.

Circolo Aqua is fully integrated into the line's enhanced Agent Portal, offering real-time tracking of tier status and miles earned; booking value and progress toward the next tier; upcoming rewards and redemption windows; and bonus challenges and campaign incentives.

Further details on the guest version of the loyalty program will be made soon.

"Circolo Aqua is more than a loyalty program - it's a curated circle of our most trusted trade partners," founder and Chief Exec Francesco Galli Zugaro said.

"We wanted to celebrate the individuals and companies who drive our growth by offering meaningful rewards and recognition, structured with the same care and attention to detail we bring to every voyage." *MS*



CLIA UPDATE

with Joel Katz
MD, CLIA Australasia

Sailing for Broome

Broome offers enormous possibilities as a cruise gateway, and in the past week cruise industry representatives have united around efforts to unlock its potential.

Tourism WA hosted cruise lines and industry representatives including CLIA and the Australian Cruise Association (ACA) in Broome over the weekend, providing an opportunity to discuss the development of cruise tourism into the future.

The visit included an inspection of the new Kimberley Marine Support Base floating wharf ready to open in Broome - a huge infrastructure project designed to improve facilities and overcome the region's enormous tides.

Planning is also underway for a new cruise terminal, allowing further improvements for visitors.

Projects like this support the industry's vision for first-point-of-entry status for Broome, which would allow international ships to arrive directly without having to stop in Darwin or Fremantle.

CLIA and the ACA are working with cruise lines, the port, the WA Government and federal agencies to achieve this status, which would open up new possibilities for cruise itineraries.

By working together across all areas of government and industry, we have the potential to unlock greater investment, visitation and employment for communities throughout WA, and around Australia.



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Here's to finding the edge of your comfort zone at the edge of the Earth on a once-in-a-lifetime voyage to Antarctica. Starting January 2026, guests embarking on an Antarctica Fly Cruise will begin their Expedition with the signature Silversea hospitality — at The Cormorant at 55 SouthSM. Skip The Drake Passage and fly directly to The Last Continent. Expedition Leaders take you down untrodden paths, deep into the Antarctic Wilderness, where silence and awe are etched in wild beauty. Uncover the wonders of Antarctica that most miss, following your curiosity to the edge of the Earth, and embracing the joy of untouched beauty. To Finding More.

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