



Cruise Weekly today

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

HX's 130th birthday

HX IS promoting its 130th anniversary offer, which includes a number of deals on Antarctica this year.

Pax can get up to 25% off or a free suite upgrade on a number of cruises.

Itineraries to other destinations are also on sale with up to 35% off, including the Galapagos, Greenland, as well as Alaska.

Sailings featured include 'Galapagos Islands - in Darwin's Footsteps'; 'Discovering Greenland - From Reykjavik to Nuuk' and 'Alaska's Inside Passage - Fjords of the Great Land' - head to **page four** for more.

FCTG: War impacting cruise bookings

THE cruise sector is one of the most exposed to the disrupted travel environment brought about by the Iran war, Flight Centre Travel Group (FCTG) has warned.

A presentation to investors released by FCTG to the Australian Securities Exchange yesterday noted the cruise sector, as well as touring, as some of the hardest hit due to disruptions to the operations of the three major Middle Eastern airlines.

Europe is one of Australia's most popular international cruise destinations, with many passengers being forced to reroute their air travel or delay their departure due to the war.

Higher airfares and longer routings have also sparked customer hesitation, FCTG noted.

The company is expecting its results to be heavily affected in Apr in particular, citing a hit of around \$10 million year-on-year



for the month.

The mass market segment is expected to be the most heavily impacted, with more than 25,000 bookings disrupted, and around 6% cancelled.

Most customers are cancelling and rebooking, with FCTG pointing out its consultants have proved to be a differentiator for the business amid the disruption.

However, the South Pacific - frequently cited as Australia's most popular cruise destination - has remained largely unaffected.

The disruption caused by the war has not seen FCTG change course from its growing cruise investment though, with the sector cited alongside luxury as two areas in which the firm will strengthen its presence. MS

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Oceania drops NCFs

OCEANIA Cruises has announced it will scrap non-commissionable fares (NCFs) on all newly launched sailings (**CW** breaking news).

The decision will come into effect from the northern summer 2028 season, with published commission rates to apply to the recently released winter 2028/29 seasons, the Around the World 2028 and 2029 voyages, and more cruises opening for sale soon.

Oceania said the move aims to simplify advisor compensation, improve earnings transparency, and reaffirm itself as a partner of choice for travel advisors around the world.

The cruise line's chief sales officer Nathan Hickman explained that the decision "increases advisor earning potential on every booking and reflects our commitment to building the most advisor-centric commercial model in luxury cruising".

Oceania's elimination of NCFs was first trialled for its top-selling advisors (**CW** 19 Dec 2023), and follows its sister brand Norwegian Cruise Line's ending of NCFs at the start of the year (**CW** 08 Jan).

Star shines in Seattle's sky



PRINCESS Cruises celebrated the debut of *Star Princess* (pictured above) in Seattle yesterday for her inaugural Alaskan season.

The Sphere-class ship has now begun sailing weekly from Seattle's Pier 91 to the Inside Passage of Alaska.

Star will sail weekly round trip cruises to destinations including Ketchikan, Juneau, Skagway, and Sitka, featuring breathtaking glacier viewing with Endicott Arm and Dawes Glacier.

The ship is joined in Seattle for the 2026 Alaska season by *Royal Princess*, which also sails weekly to the Inside Passage.

Star's arrival was marked with a traditional maritime plaque exchange between the Port of Seattle and senior officials from the cruise line.

This included *Star* Captain Gennaro Arma, president Gus Antorcha, and representatives from local maritime, port operations, labour, and public safety partners.

The ceremony followed a spectacular Alaska-themed drone show at the local Seattle Center entertainment precinct on Sat, welcoming the ship's arrival against the Seattle skyline (pictured inset).



"It's especially meaningful for the officers and crew of *Star Princess* to be here in Seattle, a port with a proud maritime heritage and long-standing connection to Alaska," Arma said.

"Designed for these journeys, *Star Princess* brings together advanced technology, comfort, and elegance as we continue Princess Cruises' legacy in Alaska.

"We're grateful to the Port of Seattle and our port partners for their warm welcome and continued collaboration."

This year will be Princess' largest Alaska season ever, with the cruise line to deploy eight ships to the region.

Joining *Star* and *Royal* in Alaska will be *Coral Princess*, *Ruby Princess*, *Grand Princess*, *Emerald Princess*, *Discovery Princess*, and *Island Princess*.

The fleet will depart from a range of home ports across North America, including San Francisco, Vancouver, Los Angeles, and Whittier, offering a variety of itineraries from six to 20 days. *MS*

Hondius pax evac'd

TWO individuals currently requiring urgent care on board Oceanwide Expeditions' *Hondius* will be evacuated to the Netherlands using two specialised aircraft, the line revealed in an update provided to press early this morning.

The passenger associated with one of the guests who passed away earlier will also join the flight.

Once the three individuals have been safely transferred from the vessel, *Hondius* will proceed to the Canary Islands, either Gran Canaria or Tenerife, with details to be confirmed.

Oceanwide said it continues to hold discussions with relevant authorities.

Viking open for sale

VIKING has opened bookings for its 2028/29 expedition voyages, with new departure dates now available on some of its most popular itineraries.

Cruises in the Arctic, Antarctica, and the Great Lakes are all now available for booking, as are additional sailings of Viking's 'Longitudinal World Cruises' and 'Into the Arctic Circle' trip.

Voyages will sail aboard Viking's pair of expedition ships, *Viking Octantis* and *Viking Polaris*, which can host 378 guests in 189 staterooms.



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PORThOLE

COULD your next cruise see you float past...a data centre in the middle of the ocean?

Silicon Valley is betting big on this concept, with investors staking hundreds of millions of dollars on testing floating AI computing nodes in the middle of the Pacific Ocean this year.

The latest prototype, called Ocean-3, would be about as large as London's Big Ben.

Energy and computing company Panthalassa is behind the project, which will see waves power AI data centres, as the sector's use of both water and land comes under continued scrutiny.

Each node resembles a huge steel sphere bobbing on the water with a tube-like structure extending vertically down beneath the surface of the water.

Tides feed water through the tube into a pressurised reservoir, where it will spin a turbine generator producing renewable energy for the AI technology on board.

The ocean water can also be used to cool the nodes - another advantage over land-based data centres.



MSC cruises into the F1



MSC Cruises brought its exclusive MSC Yacht Club experience trackside to the Miami Grand Prix on the weekend **(pictured)**, showcasing its ship-within-a-ship concept.

The experience was 'anchored' in the Marina area at the Miami International Autodrome, delivering a premium, all-inclusive race weekend experience with trackside views of turns 5-9.

Spanning 80 metres long and 29 metres wide, the Yacht Club evoked the elegance of a super yacht, with spaces featuring multiple viewing decks, open-air

terraces, refined lounges, shaded seating areas, and pools.

"Renowned for its exceptional level of personalised service and exclusivity, the MSC Yacht Club is one of our most celebrated offerings, and we've reimaged it as a bold, first-of-its-kind hospitality destination for race weekend - another demonstration of how our partnership with motorsport continues to grow from strength to strength since we became a global partner of Formula 1," head of sports sponsorships Alberto Revelli said. *MS*

Carnival Corp set to move to new home

CARNIVAL Corporation has broken ground on its new global headquarters in Miami.

The site will be based in the Waterford Business District next to the airport, with the company to be located at 887 Carnival Place once the project is completed in 2028.

Expected to house more than 2,000 team members,

the development will include an estimated 65,000m² of workspace, which will feature training and rehearsal space for onboard performers.

The day of the groundbreaking, 01 May, was also declared 'Carnival Day' by Miami-Dade County, in recognition of the company's 50-year heritage in the region.



CLIA UPDATE

with Joel Katz
MD, CLIA Australasia

A positive outlook

WITHIN CLIA's recent *State of the Cruise Industry* report is a great deal of data showing a very positive outlook for cruising - including good indicators for travel agents.

Despite recent travel disruptions, the underlying outlook is positive and the report forecasts further growth in cruise passenger numbers worldwide, not only this year but for the rest of the decade.

Having carried a record 37.2 million passengers worldwide in 2025, we expect cruise lines to carry up to 42.1 million guests in 2029.

For travel agents, expectations are similarly strong and most agents anticipate growth.

CLIA's surveys show 62% of agents expect increased cruise sales in 2026, and 48% expect that growth to be at least 6% over the prior year.

The data also shows continuing recognition of the importance of travel agents.

An overwhelming majority of cruise guests book their sailings through an agent, and this has remained consistent over time.

CLIA's surveys show the intention to cruise is high.

Among people who have cruised before, 89.7% say they will cruise again. Of those who have never sailed, 75.6% say they would consider a cruise.

You can find out more in our report **HERE**.



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Destination	Itinerary	Ship	Tour Start	Duration	Cabins From	Suites From
Antarctica	Highlights of Antarctica	MS Fridtjof Nansen	30/10/2026	12 Days	\$14,592 pp	\$20,776 pp
Antarctica	Iconic Antarctica – The Explorer's Route	MS Roald Amundsen	31/10/26	16 Days	\$16,334 pp	\$22,833 pp
Antarctica	Life Returns – Springtime Expedition to Antarctica	MS Fram	16/10/26	23 Days	\$23,754 pp	\$31,894 pp
Greenland	Discovering Greenland – From Reykjavik to Nuuk	MS Fridtjof Nansen	02/06/27	14 Days	\$12,537 pp	\$17,830 pp
Alaska	Alaska's Inside Passage – Fjords of The Great Land	MS Roald Amundsen	22/05/27	10 Days	\$7,916 pp	\$12,377 pp
Iceland	Elemental Iceland – Circular Saga from Reykjavik	MS Fridtjof Nansen	19/05/27	8 Days	\$7,444 pp	\$10,422 pp

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Discount offer applies to new bookings made from 1 May 2026 to 31 August 2026 ("Offer Period") for selected HX departures from 15 May 2026 to 31 March 2028. Bookings made outside of the Offer Period will not qualify. Offers with a saving, discount or amount off stated in AUD represents a discount applied to the "From" price quoted in AUD per person based on double occupancy of cabin on the specified sailing or Tour Code. Offer is subject to availability and may be withdrawn at any time without prior notice. Single supplements may apply and applies to all offer occupancies.
Suite upgrade offer applies to new bookings made from 1 May 2026 to 31 August 2026 ("Offer Period") and is capacity controlled for selected HX departures from 16 October 2026 to 31 December 2027. Departures may be removed at any time. Bookings made outside of the Offer Period will not qualify. Offer is subject to suite availability at the time of booking. Availability must exist in the following suite categories – ME (MS Roald Amundsen & MS Fridtjof Nansen) and Q2 (MS Fram). Offer is not applicable to any other suite category (ie MG on MS Fram and MF, MD, MC, MB and MA on MS Roald Amundsen & MS Fridtjof Nansen). Offers with a saving, discount or amount off stated in AUD represents a discount applied to the "From" price quoted in AUD per person based on double occupancy of cabin on the specified sailing or Tour Code. Offer is subject to availability and may be withdrawn at any time without prior notice. Single supplements may apply and apply to all offer occupancies.

