**Statement**

9 January 2020

**Australian Cruise Association**

**Bushfire Statement**

**Prepared by Jill Abel, CEO**

The Australian Cruise Association is deeply saddened by the devastation caused by the ongoing bushfires. Our thoughts and condolences go to all the families and communities impacted and our gratitude goes to all the frontline services who are working tirelessly in very challenging conditions.

We are working closely with our members during these difficult times to continually assess and respond to the events at hand.

I would like to express our gratitude to all our members who are lending their support on a daily basis to assist where possible. These include our port members such as Tasports in Burnie, Port of Melbourne Corporation and Flinders Ports in Port Lincoln, who recently received diverted cruise line calls at short notice. Recently joined member, Svitzer, played a crucial role on the south coast in the midst of the crisis last week offering shelter on their tug boats to the local community, and working with the RFS to pick up stranded firefighters and workers around Twofold Bay. In Westernport, they donated towage services bringing HMAS Choules and MV Sycamore into berth. Plaza Premium Lounges is hosting all international firefighting crews in their departure lounges and will match any donations received from their members. Sealink is providing free passenger ferry access to Kangaroo Island along with a generous financial contribution to support the local community.

While the situation is constantly evolving as the bushfires continue to burn, we are pleased to report that many regions and tourism areas remain unaffected by the bushfires and continued visitation to these areas will play a vital role in supporting and reinvigorating these local economies. In fact, even our members that have been affected including Kangaroo Island and Eden, have voiced their need and support for visiting cruise ships.

ACA is also working closely with our members in destination management such Tourism Australia and the State Tourism Organisations as well as CLIA to monitor the situation and provide updates. We are grateful for the donations being made by several of the cruise lines and are encouraging our cruise line partners to keep in close contact with their local shipping agents for regular updates and also follow a continually updating Tourism Australia bushfire information site [www.australia.com/en/travel-alerts.html](http://www.australia.com/en/travel-alerts.html) so they can continue to provide a positive visitor experience to their cruise passengers.

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**About Australian Cruise Association:**

Australian Cruise Association is the co-operative marketing brand for cruise tourism in the Australia and Pacific region and represents a diversity of interests including regional ports, international, national and state tourism agencies, shipping agents, inbound tour operators and companies dedicated to marketing the region as a world class cruise destination.

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