



CRUISE companies, particularly river cruise lines, are constantly on the hunt for new destinations to sail in.

One Australian man may have just provided a new answer.

Verdis was once a previously unclaimed pocket of land between Serbia and Croatia - that was until 20-year-old Daniel Jackson declared himself the president of the patch of dirt.

The parcel was left unclaimed by the two Balkan states following the Croatian War of Independence in 1995.

Jackson is fortunately planning to be a benevolent leader, proposing the tiny state of Verdis as a place where "new systems of governance" can be tested, and for humanitarian workers to live.

However, he is currently being forced to "govern" Verdis in absentia, in exile in the United Kingdom, thanks to Croatia not looking too kindly upon his claim.

Where cruise may be able to get in on the fun is that the microstate borders the Danube - one of the most popular rivers for cruise lines.

As Jackson continues to seek international recognition of his state, **CW** would not be surprised if he is happy to set up shore excursions showing off the country, which is barely larger than Vatican City.

New NCLH office takes the cake



NORWEGIAN Cruise Line Holdings (NCLH) last night celebrated 10 years in business in APAC operating from an office in Sydney, and took the opportunity to officially open its new headquarters in Barangaroo.

The event was hosted by Oceania Cruises and Regent Seven Seas Cruises (RSSC) Senior Vice President International & Consumer Sales Steve Odell, Norwegian Cruise Line Vice President & Managing Director Ben Angell, and RSSC Vice President Sales & GM Lisa Pile.

Odell said of the occasion, "It's amazing to be here at this time for me because, as many of you know, I was the number one employee back in 2015 when I met Harry Sommer, who is now our big boss at NCLH, and I went for an interview because the

company wanted to open an office in Australia for APAC."

Odell added that it would be 10 years on 01 Oct and that there were still a few of the originals in the building.

"I think the longevity of the management and the consistency of the management has been key to our success in this market - it's been very stable and we have managed to grow together and learn together."

Odell also thanked the company's Miami head office and said that it had bought into the local proposition in "a very intense way".

Angell revealed that the NCLH office now houses close to 200 people locally. *DF*

Pictured: Pile, Odell, and Angell prepare to enjoy a slice of delicious NCLH-themed cake.



AUSTRALIAN CRUISE ASSOCIATION
ACA UPDATE
with Jill Abel - CEO

Fremantle is ready

LAST week, I had the pleasure of attending CLIA's Cruise360 in Brisbane, an event that once again reinforced the strength and collaboration of our industry.

The global growth of cruise is very positive, with 81 new ships ordered over the next 10 years and our focus being to maintain and grow our share of this expansion.

Cruise360 provided the perfect stage to highlight opportunities and challenges, and to set the tone for the week ahead.

Today, I'm delighted to share that the 2025 ACA Conference has officially kicked off in Fremantle.

We're welcoming a record delegation of more than 160 - a clear reflection of the current momentum of our cruise industry.

Delegates are out exploring Fremantle on networking tours, experiencing everything from the historic port precinct to the city's vibrant food and culture, and this evening, we'll gather at Gage Roads Free for our welcome function near Fremantle Port.

Adding to the occasion, *Scenic Eclipse II* will make its first call to Fremantle today and, in perfect timing, will sail past our function at 6pm - a fitting reminder of the opportunity in our industry.

Tomorrow, we move into a full day of conference sessions featuring international and domestic speakers who will bring valuable insights across sustainability, destination development, and market trends.

It is shaping up to be an inspiring few days here in Fremantle, as we celebrate achievements, tackle challenges, and continue to drive the future of cruise in Australia.