

WESTERN AUSTRALIAN CRUISE TOURISM HANDY REFERENCE GUIDE



WESTERN
AUSTRALIA
WALKING ON A DREAM

♀ FREMANTLE | WALYALUP

PREPARING FOR SUCCESS IN THE CRUISE INDUSTRY

Successfully promoting businesses to the cruise tourism market takes time and effort, and in part, is dependent on undertaking appropriate research to understand the structure of the sector and the relevant stakeholders to liaise with.

Ground handlers (Inbound Tour Operators), seek tourism products that match with passenger demographics and preferences of the cruise line they represent. They are usually limited to including products within 90 minutes travel time from the port or disembarkation point. They then combine products into short (3 hour), medium (5-6 hour) and long (7-8 hour) tours, in considering the scheduled timings for the visit.

If your goal is to have your product offered as a pre bookable shore excursion (shorex), it is important to be aware of the 'rules of engagement' between your business and the cruise line.

For example, disembarkation and embarkation procedures, delivering passengers back to the ship at the appointed time, ensuring you hold the appropriate licences and insurance, providing appropriate net rates and offering acceptable terms and conditions, tailoring/adapting your product as required; and, wherever possible, over-delivering on your level of service.

Word-of-mouth is crucial for this sector — cruise ship passengers are avid talkers and social media users and given the extremely high rates of repeat cruising, cruise lines are by necessity, very responsive to their clients' feedback.



CRUISE DISTRIBUTION FROM DEMAND TO SUPPLY



CRUISE INDUSTRY PARTICIPANTS (THE STRUCTURE)

Cruise Line(s) e.g. Carnival, Silversea, Royal Caribbean

Ground handler e.g. Abercrombie and Kent (Akorn), Shorex Australia, Bob Wood Cruise Group, Insight Australia, Intercruises Shoreside and Port Services

State & national tourism organisations/ tourism operators (suppliers), peak industry bodies i.e. Australian Cruise Association (ACA), Cruise Line Industry Association (CLIA), and others

Cruise Passengers

TODAY'S TRAVELLER

Travellers' needs have changed significantly, and cruise passengers' requirements have changed in line with these. In general terms:

- Time, comfort, attentiveness, peace and space are the new luxury goods.
- Visitors value free time to explore, and they like to meet the locals, make connections and experience the local lifestyle.
- They are more eco conscious than ever and actively seek experiences that showcase the natural environment, wildlife, and sustainability of the area.
- They also look for unique experiences that aren't offered by other destinations.

They seek choices in and around

- Nature;
- Shopping;
- Soft adventure; and
- Exclusive access.

46 YEARS

Average age of a cruise traveler

36%

are under the age of 40

Average passenger spend per day

Turnaround Ports

Transit Ports

A\$516

Domestic pax

A\$661

International pax

A\$197

Domestic pax

A\$280

International pax

THE NATURE OF SHORE EXCURSIONS (SHOREX)

- Shorex are the official on shore tours offered by cruise lines and considered an extremely important revenue stream.
- Shorex are pre-booked by cruise passengers either at the time of booking their cruise holiday, on-line pre-departure or on-board prior to arrival in a port destination.
- Availability and content of shorex is determined by cruise lines through their appointed ground handler, generally on an exclusive charter basis, ensuring the tours offered are tailored to the needs of their clients and consider the time ashore in each port destination.
- Once tours are agreed and contracted at the destination, cruise lines offer a wide range of targeted pre-determined/pre-costed shorex programs which are well promoted prior to the ship's arrival.
- Participating in shorex programs ensures security for the tour operator/supplier in that anticipated numbers, inclusions/exclusions and payment arrangements are agreed well in advance of the call, and marketing of their product to passengers occurs prior to the ship's arrival.

Pre booked shorex also provide security for passengers as they:

- Can familiarise themselves with the itinerary, inclusions etc. prior to arrival;
- Know the tours have been checked and are of high-quality;
- Are aware that the ship will wait for them if for some reason the tour is held up, and that the cruise line will address any issues on their behalf should they arise.
- Will generally get priority disembarkation.

Shorex Trends

- It has become challenging for cruise lines to persuade passengers to pre book shorex, as travellers are now more confident to research destinations and book independently.
- Cruise lines make a concerted effort to extensively promote shorex pre-cruise and onboard, therefore the uniqueness and quality of shorex offerings is paramount. It is also very important that ground handlers are provided with in-depth and appealing content, and especially quality imagery, to enable them to effectively market products.



📍 PRINCE FREDERICK HARBOUR, THE KIMBERLEY

KEY POINTS TO REMEMBER

- Passenger demographics vary for different cruise lines.
- Consider passenger nationalities aboard each cruise ship.
- It is important to be flexible – especially if weather is a factor to consider in port destinations where adverse conditions can cause cancellations at short notice.
- It's all about an experience – try to carve a niche and offer something different to what can be found in other ports/destinations; play to Western Australia's strengths.
- Work closely with the ground handler to optimise participation in shorex programs – this is a relationship building exercise with lead times to consider.
- Not everyone on the ship wants to take a group sightseeing excursion, e.g. sometimes shorex are designed for couples, such as a helicopter tour to a winery.

THE BIDDING AND BOOKING PROCESS

(How the ground handler works with the cruise line and the supplier)

- 1 Cruise line makes a request to ground handlers to bid for a program to be delivered at specified ports, usually at least one year in advance.
- 2 The ground handler is appointed by the cruise line and a tour program is agreed well in advance from the vessel departing on an itinerary.
- 3 Ground handler then secures services from suppliers (i.e. tour operators), holding inventory as guests continue to book and sometimes cancel tours prior to arrival in port, with final numbers confirmed by 24 hours prior to arrival.
- 4 Bookings for Shorex made prior to the ship commencing an itinerary are passed over to the ship's ground handler.

THE REASONS WHY CRUISE LINES PARTNER WITH AN APPOINTED GROUND HANDLER

- It is too complex and time consuming for cruise lines to contact each individual operator/supplier at each destination for every itinerary.
- The geographical distance and time differences between respective cruise line head offices and each port destination would make individual liaison problematic and cost prohibitive.
- Ultimately cruise lines need to utilise an intermediary to ensure seamless coordination prior to and at the destination, for this reason the cruise lines task a ground handler based in the region with overall contracting and logistical control of the shore excursions being offered

Business considerations in working with a ground handler

- A business must hold appropriate level of insurance and meet licencing requirements.
- Be flexible due to factors outside the control of the cruise line i.e. weather conditions.
- Acknowledge that ship departure times and itineraries may be amended at the last minute given all port arrivals are subject to weather conditions and are part of a larger itinerary.
- It may be advantageous to schedule multiple smaller groups in one day, for example a tour may only be able to take 12 guests at a time, however over three time slots the ship can be provided with 36 tickets to sell.
- Stick to what you have agreed to include in the program and do not make any changes without consulting the ground handler.
- It is important for agreements with ground handlers to stipulate what will happen should a scheduled cruise visit be cancelled. To ensure that your business is not left out of pocket, ground handlers aim to nurture sound business relationships and will want to work with you to ensure you are comfortable with contingency arrangements.
- Be very clear on any tour inclusions, and on details relating to access and fitness levels, advise any minimum/maximum guest capacity – i.e. will the tour depart with two guests?
- Include any special conditions or block out dates well in advance in writing.



PRICING YOUR PRODUCT WHEN WORKING WITH A GROUND HANDLER

- Ground handlers provide a valuable distribution and coordination role, enabling shorex options to be fast tracked directly to cruise passengers.
- The selling price aboard the ship is usually significantly higher than the net rate provided by the supplier. The product and net rates offered to ground handlers should be an exclusive offer wherever possible. Cruise lines seek to avoid competing with published rates and it is better to value-add or differentiate to avoid direct rate comparisons.
- Any special rates contracted with intermediaries should not be considered as being a discount, but rather as a marketing cost that enables inclusion in the shorex program to be pre booked by cruise passengers.
- Net pricing needs to correlate to the large number of passengers being delivered by cruise lines, the logistics involved in setting up and managing the programs, and the promotion of shorex to a large, targeted audience at no cost to the supplier.

Key ground handlers:

Akorn - Abercrombie & Kent

Jeff Barnard, Cruise Operations Manager
jbarnard@akorndmc.com

Bob Wood Cruise Group

Carmen Stevenson, General Manager
carmen@sthpactours.com.au

Insight Australia Travel

Birgit Bourne, Managing Director
birgit@insightaustralia.com.au

Intercruises Shoreside & Port Services

Joanne Brown, Commercial Development Manager
j.brown@intercruises.com

Shorex Australia

Karin Ohman, General Manager
karin@shorexaustralia.com



INDEPENDENT CRUISE TRAVELLERS

- Are looking for tours and experiences they can book independent of the cruise line, either in advance of arriving to a destination or they may wish to book on the day.
- If you would like to offer a tour outside of the official excursion program, you need to ensure your product can be easily found online and on the day.

HOW DO CUSTOMERS BOOK YOUR PRODUCT DIRECTLY?

- Ensure your website has content tailored toward cruise passengers, contains effective key words that deliver search engine optimisation and communicates your destination knowledge and understanding of the needs of the respective cruise ships. Be prepared to adapt your product to suit the needs of the various cruise ship passenger profiles and logistics.
- Approximately 45% of passengers are not pre-booking tour options and often make their way to the local visitor centre upon arrival.

CRUISE INDUSTRY ASSOCIATIONS

The Australian Cruise Association

The Australian Cruise Association (ACA) is the co-operative marketing brand for Australian and the Pacific region. The organisation is made up of 93 members and represents regional ports, national and state tourism agencies, shipping agents, ground handlers/inbound tour operators and companies dedicated to making the Australian Cruise Association region a major world class base and destination for cruise vessels.

Membership information:

[About us](#) | [Australia Cruise Association](#)

Cruise Line Industry Association

Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA) provides a unified voice for the global cruise community, which includes the world's most prestigious ocean, river, and specialty cruise lines; an expansive group of maritime leaders who provide technical expertise, products and services to the cruise sector; leading ports, destinations, shipyards; and the largest network of travel professionals who specialise in cruise travel.

Membership information:

[Become a Member](#) | [CLIA](#)

WESTERN AUSTRALIA CRUISE DESTINATION CONTACTS

The following organisations are active in developing cruise tourism:

ALBANY

City of Albany

albany.wa.gov.au

Carmen Fasolo

Carmen.Fasolo@albany.wa.gov.au

EXMOUTH

Shire of Exmouth

exmouth.wa.gov.au

Courtney Somerville

csomerville@exmouth.wa.gov.au

BROOME

Cruise Broome

cruisebroome.com

Shayne Murray

ShayneMurray@cruisebroome.com

FREMANTLE

City of Fremantle

fremantle.wa.gov.au

Heather Christy

heatherc@fremantle.wa.gov.au

BUSSELTON

Margaret River Busselton

Tourism Association

mrbta.com

Jenny Lee

jenny.lee@mrbta.com

GERALDTON

Mid West Ports Authority

midwestports.com.au

Dee Juskov

dee.juskov@midwestports.com.au

DAMPIER

Pilbara Tourism Association

pilbaratourism.com

Barry Harrison

merimbulawaterview@gmail.com

PERTH

Destination Perth

destinationperth.com.au

Sonja Mitchell

sonja@destinationperth.com.au

ESPERANCE

Australia's Golden Outback

australiasgoldenoutback.com

Annabelle Hender

annabelle.hender@goldenoutback.com

A LOCOHOL GUIDE FOR AUSTRALIAN PORTS

When it comes to bringing alcohol on board, policies vary by cruise line. Australian Cruise Association (ACA) have compiled a comprehensive list of alcohol policies of all major cruise lines that operate in Australia. The Guide is updated by the Australian Cruise Association and available here; [Alcohol Guide for Australian Ports ACA AND CLIA](#).

CRUISE TOURISM NEWS SOURCES

Cruise Industry News
cruiseindustrynews.com

Cruising News
cruisingnews.com.au

Cruise Weekly
cruiseweekly.com.au

Seatrade Cruise Review
seatrade-cruise.com

Seatrade Maritime News
seatrade-maritime.com

CRUISE LINES

AIDA Cruises
aide.de

Azamara Cruises
azamara.com

Ambassador Cruise Line
ambassadorcruiseline.com

Carnival Cruise Lines
carnival.com

Celebrity Cruises
celebritycruises.com.au

Coral Expeditions
coralexpeditions.com

Costa Cruises
costacruises.com

Crystal Cruises
crystalcruises.com

Cunard Line Limited
cunard.com

Disney Cruise Line
disney.com.au

Fred Olsen Cruise Lines
fredolsencruises.com

Hapag Lloyd Cruises
hlcruises.com

Heritage Expeditions
heritage-expeditions.com

Holland America Line
hollandamerica.com

Hurtigruten
hurtigruten.com

Lindblad Expeditions
expeditions.com

Mediterranean Shipping Company
msccruises.com

North Star Cruises
truenorth.com.au

Norwegian Cruise Line
ncl.com

Oceania Cruises
oceaniacruises.com

P&O Cruises UK Limited
pocruises.com

Phoenix Reisen
phoenixreisen.com

Ponant
au.ponant.com

Princess Cruises
princesscruises.com

Regent Seven Seas Cruises
rssc.com

Royal Caribbean International
royalcaribbean.com.au

Saga Shipping Company
saga.co.uk

Seadream Yacht Club
seadream.com

Seabourn Cruise Line
seabourn.com

Scenic
scenic.co.au

Silversea Cruises
silversea.com

Swan Hellenic
swanhellenic.com

Viking
vikingcruises.com

The World Residensea
aboardtheworld.com

Virgin Voyages
virginvoyages.com

Windstar Cruises
windstarcruises.com



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 Facebook:
facebook.com/extraordinarywesternaustralia

 YouTube:
youtube.com/westernaustralia

 Instagram:
Instagram.com/westernaustralia

 X:
twitter.com/westaustralia

 TikTok:
tiktok.com/westernaustralia

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