



# SEMAPHORE

Newsletter of the Maritime Law

Association of Australia and New Zealand



## Assignor Appointed to Crystal Cruises

Crystal Cruises filed a petition commencing assignment for the benefit of creditors in the Circuit Court for the Eleventh Judicial Circuit in and for Miami-Dade County (Florida) on February 11.

A notice posted on the Miami-headquartered line's website advises that it has "suspended ship operations for ocean, river and expedition cruises". A link is provided to claims-specific information related to the proceedings – including consumer and general/vendor claim forms which interested parties are required to file to assignee Mark Healy by June 11.



A recording posted to Twitter by Crew Center on February 9, is understood to capture one of Crystal Cruises' captains announcing that the fleet was now under the auspices of vessel management company V Ships Leisure.

"Unfortunately, this is the end of Crystal Cruises ... we don't know what's going to happen in the future," he said.

Founded in 1988 by Japanese shipping company Nippon Yusen Kaisha and owned since 2015 by Hong Kong-headquartered conglomerate Genting Hong Kong, Crystal Cruises' financial issues have made media headlines around the world this year.

On February 13, *Business Insider Australia* summarised recent developments as including:

- Crystal Cruises was issued with an arrest warrant in relation to a US\$1.2 million unpaid fuel bill owed by its parent company, Genting Hong Kong
- Crystal Cruises' ships Crystal Symphony and Crystal Serenity diverted to the Bahamas with hundreds of passengers onboard to escape the warrant
- the ships were ultimately arrested by authorities, but at the time of the seizures, only crew members were onboard as passengers had been disembarked on the island of Bimini
- the diversions came in the wake of the pending liquidation of Genting Hong Kong which reported a record loss of US\$1.7 billion in 2020 as the pandemic wiped out tourism

According to *Wikipedia*, in August 2020 Crystal Cruises cancelled all cruises for the remainder of the year, as its parent company suspended payments to creditors citing the impact of the COVID-19.

The online encyclopaedia reports that in March 2021, the line announced all-Bahamas cruises would start onboard the Crystal Serenity on July 3, 2021.

However, on February 8 this year, "it was announced that Crystal's headquarters in the United States would be shutting down and employees would be let go by the end of the week".

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