Dear Australian Crew Member

I know that this is a time of uncertainty and anxiety for those of us who are a long way from home. I want to assure you that the Australian Government and its representatives in the USA are working tirelessly with cruise lines and authorities to assist with your safe and timely repatriation to Australia.

We have received many enquiries from crew and family or friends who are now aware that the Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has also prohibited cruise ship crew from travelling on commercial flights in the USA. This is making it extremely difficult for cruise lines to make viable logistical arrangements for the repatriation of its crew members.

The various cruise lines are exploring a range of options and presenting them to the CDC to facilitate crew of all nationalities to disembark and return to their home countries.

Australian Government consular staff are actively engaged in discussions with the cruise lines about arrangements and plans they are making, however it is a fluid and highly complex situation, involving numerous stakeholders and a myriad of logistical challenges. We are also engaged with other Foreign Missions to work together to petition Authorities and senior levels of Government, where appropriate, to seek a quick resolution.

I encourage you to remain in regular contact with your family and to approach the cruise line in the first instance if you have any immediate medical or other concerns during the time that you must remain on board.

I would also encourage you to regularly monitor the Embassy website at; www.usa.embassy.gov.au/covid19-stay-informed and to follow us on Facebook and Twitter, where we will share the latest information we have regarding efforts to repatriate crew members. I would also ask that you share this letter with any other Australian crew on your vessel.

We strongly encourage you to engage with friends and family as regularly as possible by whatever means are available to you (phone, video chat, email, social media etc.). Also, please ensure you continue to practice social distancing and good flu-hygiene. Staying healthy is a crucial factor in facilitating a more timely return to Australia.

Yours sincerely,

The Hon Arthur Sinodinos AO