

1.32 million

Australians cruised in 2024

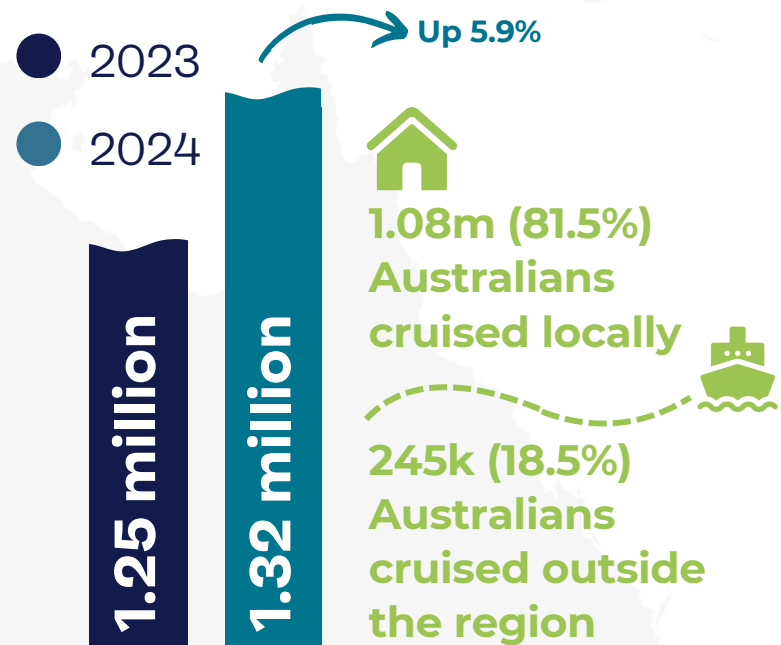
More Australians are cruising

The number of Australians taking holidays at sea has continued to grow, increasing 5.9% to 1.32 million people during 2024. This result builds on the 1.25 million recorded during 2023, when passenger numbers first rebounded beyond the benchmark of 2019.

CLIA's figures confirm the ongoing strength of the Australian cruise market and are in line with growth experienced globally. They show a continuing preference for cruising within the local region, which has continued to grow despite static ship deployment.

At the same time, the portion of Australians sailing in long-haul destinations has increased as more travellers opt for fly-cruise holidays. The number of overseas visitors choosing to sail in Australia has also increased (see page two).

Australians Cruising



Local cruising continues to thrive

More than three quarters of Australian cruisers (81.5%) sailed within Australia, New Zealand and the South Pacific, where numbers rose 1.9% to reach 1.08 million (up from 1.06 million in 2023). High levels of domestic cruise choices resulted in a 10.2% increase in the number of Australians cruising solely within Australia, totalling 781,000.

Key Trends



Strong growth in domestic cruising
(up 10.2%)

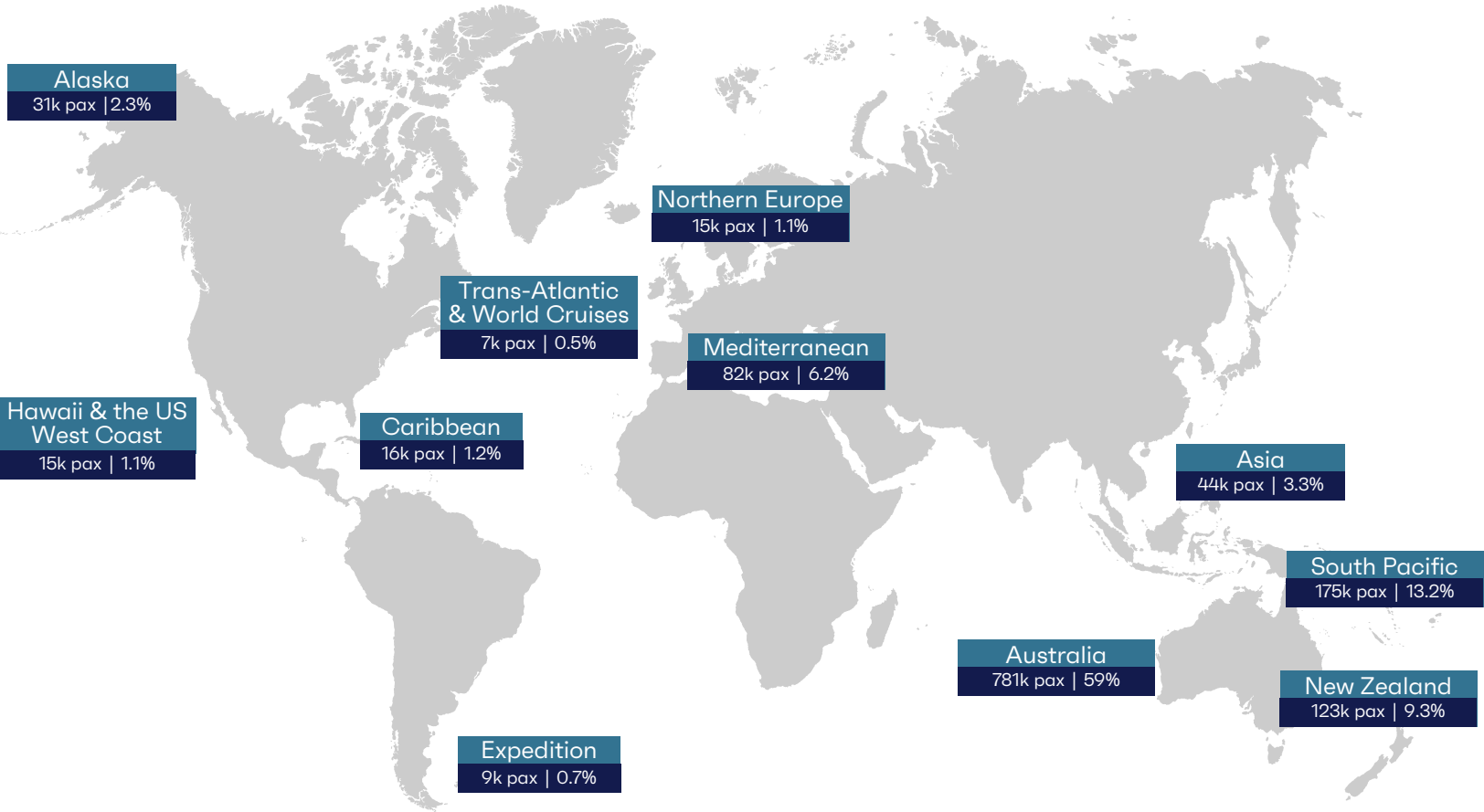


Increase levels of fly-cruise holidays
(up 29%)



Increased numbers of overseas visitors
(up 14%)

Where did Australians cruise?

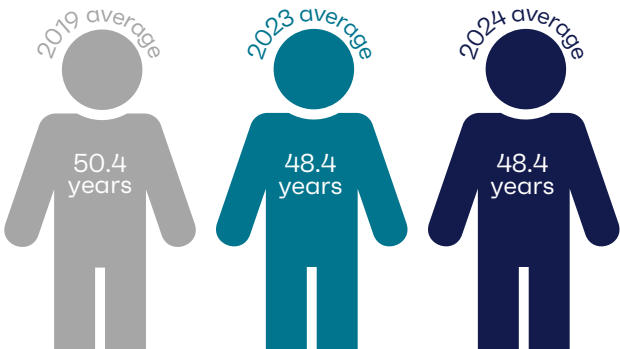


While the majority of Australians continued to sail within the local region (Australia, New Zealand and the South Pacific), the number who chose fly-cruise itineraries in long-haul destinations increased 29%, from 190,000 in 2023 to 245,000 in 2024. Fly-cruise now represents 18.5% of Australian cruise passengers, up 3.3 percentage points.

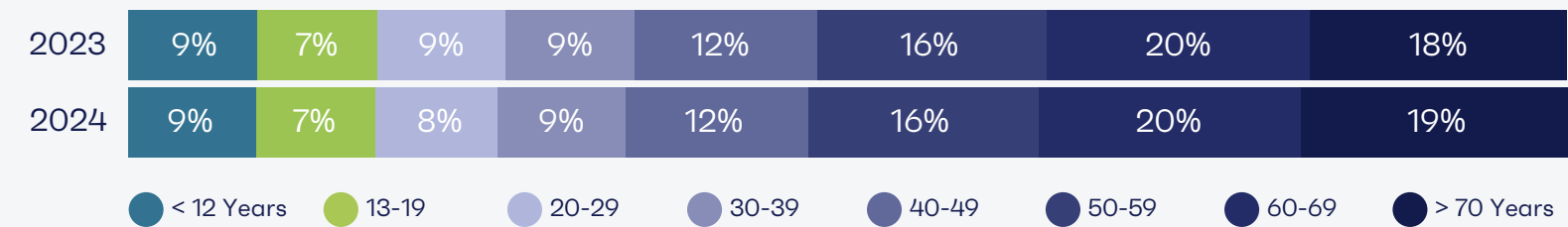
The Mediterranean was the most popular cruise destination outside the local region, followed by Asia, Alaska, the Caribbean, Hawaii and the US West Coast, and Northern Europe. Relatively smaller numbers chose Trans-Atlantic and World Cruises, and Expedition Cruises.

Australian cruise passenger age groups

The average age of an Australian cruise passenger in 2024 was the same as the previous year at 48.4, having fallen from 50.4 in 2019. This is in line with the global trend as cruise lines attract younger generations. Almost one third of Australian cruisers (32%) were aged under 40 in 2024.



% by age range

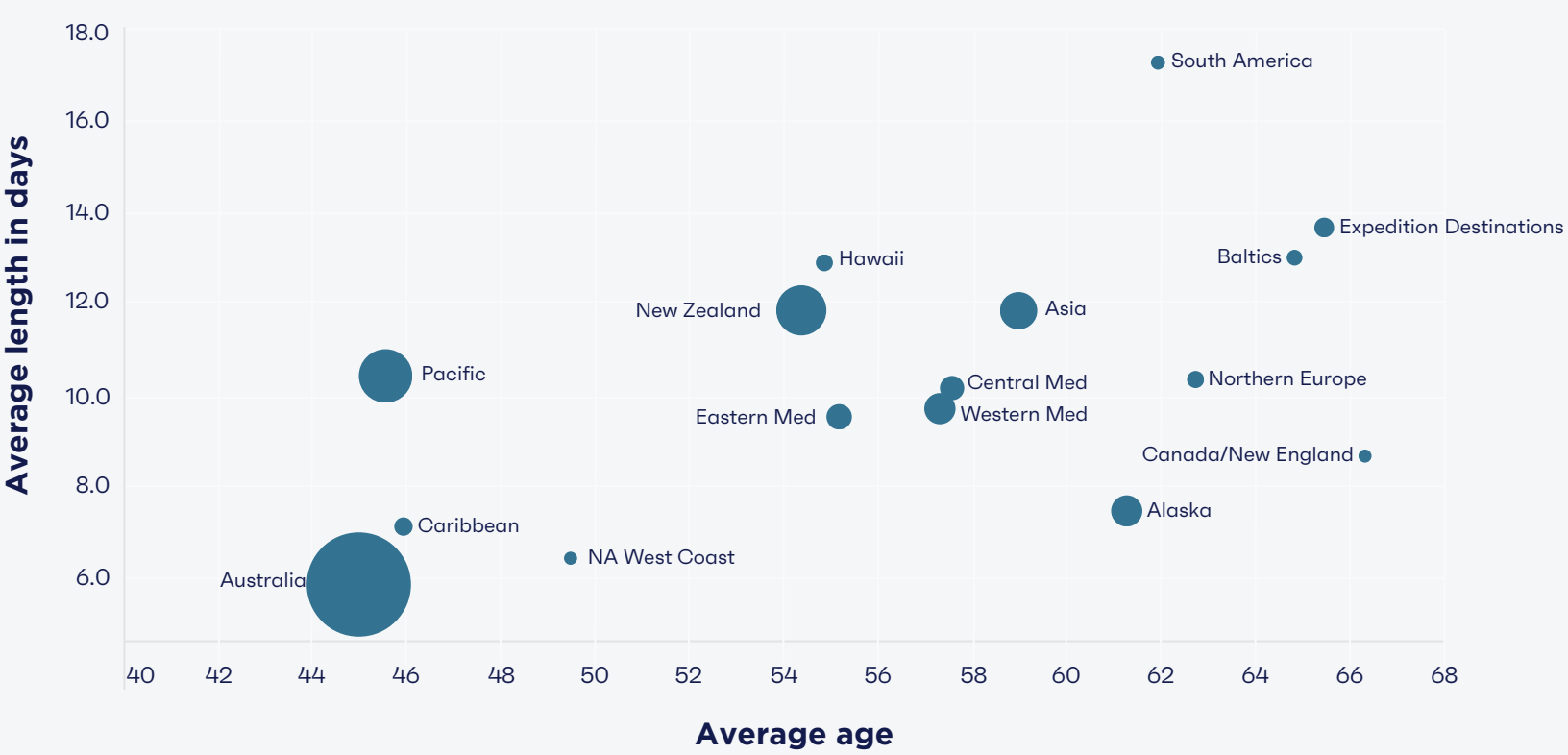




Cruise itinerary duration

The average duration of an ocean cruise taken by Australians was 8.0 days in 2024, down slightly from 8.1 days in 2023 and 9.0 days in 2019. This reflects the increase in short-break options offered by cruise lines. The age of guests continues to influence the duration and destination of cruises. Younger travellers favour shorter itineraries close-to-home, while older travellers are more likely to choose longer itineraries in fly-cruise destinations in Europe, Asia and Alaska.

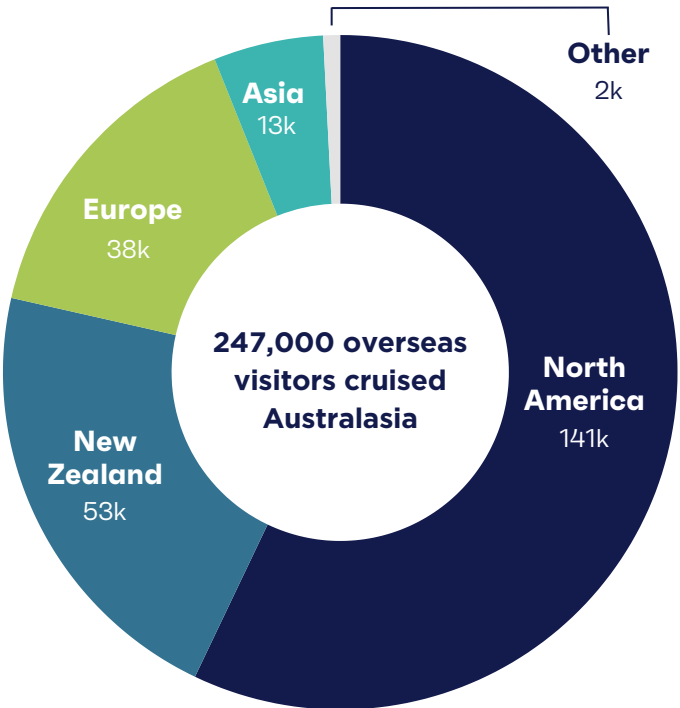
Average age and cruise length by trade route



Who cruised in Australasia?

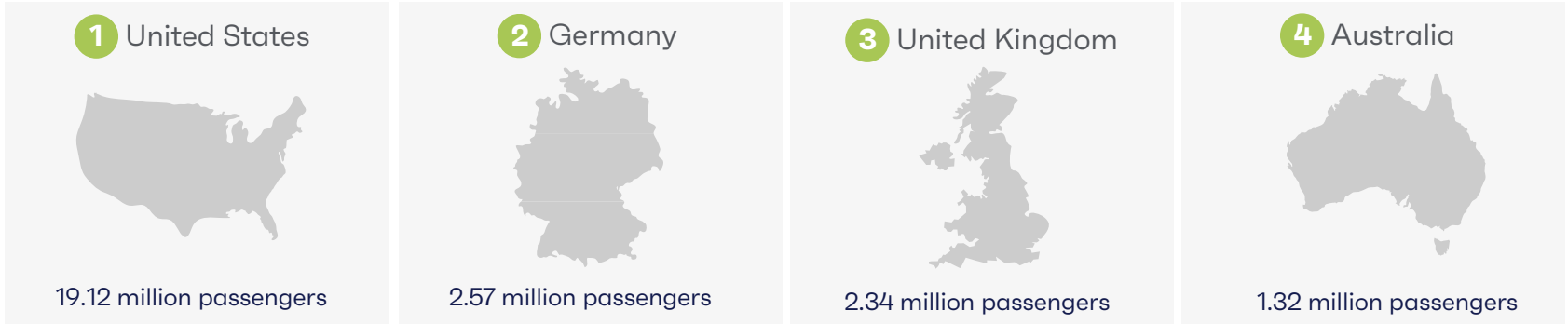
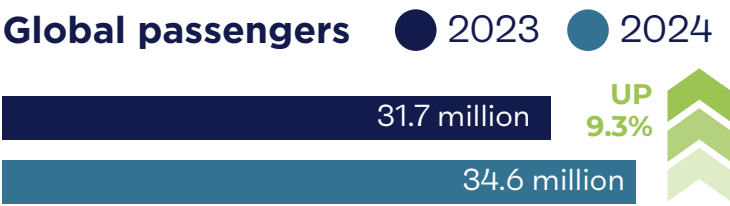
The number of overseas visitors who cruised in Australia, New Zealand and the South Pacific reached 247,000 during 2024, a 14% increase on 2023.

The largest portion of overseas visitors came from North America (141,000), followed by New Zealand (53,000), Europe (38,000), and Asia (13,000).



The world perspective

Cruise tourism achieved another record in 2024, reaching a total of 34.6 million passengers, a 9.3% increase on the previous record of 2023.



Australia continued to be the world’s fourth-largest cruise source market in 2024. China had been the fourth-largest market up to 2019 but recorded 931,000 passengers in 2024 as it continued its cruise revival, placing it behind Canada (1.18 million) and Italy (1.15 million).

CLIA forecasts show a continuing increase in global passenger numbers over coming years, including 37.7 million in 2025, rising to 41.9 million in 2028.



Future potential

Whilst continued strong growth in cruise is forecast across the globe, there is a risk the local Australia, New Zealand and Pacific region misses out. High operating costs, increasing fees and charges, and complex regulatory settings have stalled deployed capacity and threaten a short-term decline.

To secure the region’s share of tomorrow’s cruise market – and safeguard the many thousands of jobs it supports – governments, destinations and industry must unite behind a national agenda that streamlines regulations, eases growing cost burdens, and encourages greater ship deployment in local waters. Only through concerted, collaborative action can we translate today’s buoyant demand into a sustainable, competitive future for our region.