



SEMAPHORE

Newsletter of the Maritime Law

Association of Australia and New Zealand



Cruise Operations Return to Australia

P&O Cruises' 266-metre and 77,441-GT liner, the Pacific Explorer, marked the recommencement of cruise shipping to Australia on May 31, when the 1998-passenger-capacity vessel embarked on a four-day round trip between Sydney and Brisbane.

It is understood that Australia was one of the last major cruise regions in the world to reopen to the sector, following the closure of operations as part of pandemic-management measures.

President of P&O Cruises Australia and parent company Carnival Australia, Marguerite Fitzgerald, described the Pacific Explorer's sailing as an "emotional moment in time".

Thanking NSW Transport Minister David Elliott and the NSW Government for "their enthusiastic support" of the sector, Ms Fitzgerald said "so many people" had looked forward to the rebirth of the previously US\$5 billion annual Australian cruise industry.

Port Authority of NSW chief executive Captain Philip Holliday said over 40 different ships from 25 different cruise lines were scheduled to make over 300 calls in NSW during the 2022-2023 financial year.

"This is far closer to pre-pandemic figures than expected, so it is a remarkable bounce back in the cruising market – particularly domestic cruises – and demonstrates Australians are keen to get back out on the water for their next holiday," he said.



Pacific Explorer in Sydney Harbour

“Our people here at Port Authority – including our marine pilots, cruise terminal workers and our on-water crews – have been preparing for this time and are ready and raring to go.”

New Zealand Cautiously Optimistic

Meanwhile, across the Tasman Sea, New Zealand Cruise Association chair Debbie Summers has greeted her Government’s decision to reopen the maritime border to cruise shipping from July 31 with “cautious optimism and relief”.

Given the length of inactivity for the local sector, Ms Summers emphasised there was considerable work required from all stakeholders.

“To ensure the cruise sector is delivering a fantastic visitor experience will require a commitment and extremely hard work from ports, inbound tour operators, regional tourism organisations, local tour operators and the thousands of people in every region who work to make our immersive cruise experiences a success,” said Ms Summers.

However, she expressed confidence the return of cruise shipping would again be welcomed by many communities around the country and provide a significant source of tourism during 2022-2023.

“Especially those regions where cruise makes up a large part of their tourism like Northland, Gisborne, New Plymouth, Picton, Timaru and Rakiura Stewart Island. It is going to play a vital role in the tourism industry’s recovery, bringing calmer seas for everyone.

“New Zealand is an important destination for cruise lines and with worldwide demand for cruising strong again, combined with excellent regional dispersal, this sector ticks every box for value.

“After two years of hardship, hundreds of Kiwi ship suppliers and tourism operators can start rebuilding their businesses back, helping communities that have suffered during our pandemic years and begin preparing with confidence to provide our top service to cruise visitors.”

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