



SEMAPHORE

Newsletter of the Maritime Law

Association of Australia and New Zealand



Cruise Sector Bounces Back

A record New Zealand cruise season involving visits from an expected 55 vessels carrying 360,000 passengers is scheduled to conclude at the end of next month.

New Zealand Cruise Association chief executive Jacqui Lloyd recently confirmed the visiting cruise ships were “running at full capacity”.

“Around 1060 port calls are expected around the country and to 18 different ports and anchorages,” said Ms Lloyd.

“Half of those are under 1000 passengers, so those are the smaller expedition-style ships that can access some of our smaller regions, which is very positive.

“This year we have seen an increase in visitation to Timaru and New Plymouth, and Whangārei is having its first ship coming through in the beginning of February.”



Celebrating the Silver Muse becoming the 1000th cruise ship to visit Napier Port as part of the country's record cruise season was Silver Muse hotel director Daniele Franco, Silver Muse master Captain Tomasz Kulas, Leading Lights publisher Tony des Landes and Napier Port chief executive Todd Dawson

Ms Lloyd noted cruise operators had worked closed with New Zealand's Ministry for Primary Industries to address biofouling issues which inhibited the 2022-2023 post-pandemic return season. A total of 42 vessels carrying 251,000 passengers visited during the season, but eight vessels were turned away with the consequent loss of 37 port visits.

"The return of cruise happened so quickly once we got the announcement of the maritime border reopening. There had been a loss of institutional knowledge, both within the cruise lines themselves but also within the cleaning companies they were using."

She added that her members were hopeful that "safe and secure" biofouling cleaning facilities could be developed within Australasia.

"We are very supportive of New Zealand's biosecurity standards – we do not want to see those drop. But we want to make sure that if New Zealand is putting in the rules, we are not forcing ships to go into other international waters – off to Indonesia or somewhere else – to get rid of the things we don't want. It seems that we should be providing facilities here."

"Bustling" Year Also Expected for Australia

Although an update on sector developments across the Tasman had not been sighted at the time of going to press, the Australian Cruise Association was also forecasting a very positive 2023-2024 season.

In her column in the Association's 2022-2023 annual report, chief executive Jill Abel spoke of a "growing sense of enthusiasm".

"Heartfelt congratulations extend to every member of our cruise community for their commitment to the cruise sector's revival in Australia," stated Ms Abel.

"Your remarkable resilience has shone brightly amid a challenging landscape marred by employment constraints, the arduous task of rebuilding the tourism industry and navigating through Government regulations.

"It is our hope that this indomitable spirit continues to guide us, propelling us forward as we brace ourselves for what may well become the most bustling cruise season on record in 2023-2024."

Describing a "remarkable resurgence" in the global cruise sector, Ms Able said the "rapid and robust growth" seen in Australia during the 2022-2023 season "took us by surprise".

"While we anticipated a strong domestic market rebound as the dedicated cruise community embraced the seas with renewed fervour, the vigour of the return of the international market was most encouraging.

"Overseas cruise travellers graced our waters in solid numbers, outpacing many of the traditional international market segments. The momentum shows no signs of slowing down, as projections anticipate nearly 40 million passengers embarking on global cruises by 2026, a notable increase from the 30 million recorded in 2019."

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