



P&O Cruises' Latest Ship Pacific Aria Makes Maiden Visit to Newcastle As City Experiences Cruise Boom

January 27, 2016

P&O Cruises' latest ship, Pacific Aria, has made her maiden visit to Newcastle today, signaling the growing popularity of the port city as a cruise destination.

The 55,820-tonne Pacific Aria docked at Channel Berth about 8am allowing its 1500 guests to spend the day exploring the city and surrounding areas including Stockton's sand dunes, dolphin cruises at Port Stephens and food and wine tasting tours of the Hunter Valley.

The visit is part of Pacific Aria's first Australia Day cruise – a five-night roundtrip cruise from Brisbane which also included a day in Sydney Harbour on January 26 – and is expected to inject close to \$300,000 into the local economy.

P&O accounts for almost half of the cruise calls to Newcastle this season, with three of its five-ship fleet visiting the port city on five separate occasions between November 2015 and May 2016 - a significant increase on the cruise line's single visit during the 2014-15 summer cruise season. This season's five calls are expected to deliver a combined financial contribution of about \$1.5 million to the local economy.

Pacific Aria will leave at 6pm this evening and will return on March 2, 2016, as part of a dedicated four-night Newcastle cruise from Brisbane.

P&O Cruises Australia President Sture Myrmell said Newcastle was an increasingly popular call for P&O following the expansion of its fleet last year, which had opened up new itinerary opportunities.

"Newcastle has a lot to offer our guests, from its beautiful beaches to the nearby Hunter Valley wine region. Its location between Melbourne and Brisbane makes it an ideal destination for our increasingly popular short breaks, providing a great way for holidaymakers from Victoria and Queensland to enjoy a long weekend indulging in some of the best food and wine Australia has to offer both onboard our ships and in the Hunter region," Mr Myrmell said.

Featuring a relaxed, stylish design which reflects modern Australia, Pacific Aria and sister ship Pacific Eden host a range of new features including the cruise line's first Cellar Door which offers a taste of the Hunter Valley at sea with an exclusive Glandore Estate wine tasting experience.

Glandore is one of four Hunter Valley wineries featured on P&O ships, with wines from Margan, Cockfighter's Ghost and Tyrell's also offered onboard.

For more information visit pocruises.com.au, or see a licensed travel agent.

Notes to editors: The region's largest and longest-serving cruise operator, P&O Cruises Australia leads the way in cruising as Australasia's only 'home brand' and its favourite cruise line. P&O Cruises has been sailing the region for more than 80 years, and has pioneered new destinations around Australia, the Pacific and Asia including Papua New Guinea, as reported in the New York Times' 52 top destinations for 2015. P&O Cruises is the nation's largest cruise line

with five ships cruising from eight home ports in Australia, New Zealand and Singapore. In November 2015 Pacific Aria and Pacific Eden were added to the cruise line's existing three-ship fleet and in 2017 P&O Cruises will welcome its latest ship – Pacific Explorer. In another milestone, P&O will become the first cruise line to build a ship specifically for the local market, launching a brand new 135,500-tonne ship in 2019 - the biggest cruise ship ever to be based fulltime in Australia.