



## **P&O's Pacific Pearl Cruises into Auckland to launch record cruise season and begin influx of Auckland Nines fans**

February 4, 2016

New Zealand's burgeoning cruise industry is set to receive a huge boost with the arrival of P&O Cruises' Pacific Pearl into Auckland today for the launch of the cruise line's biggest ever New Zealand season, lasting a record five months.

Timed to coincide with the Downer NRL Auckland Nines, Pacific Pearl's arrival today will deliver scores of passionate Rugby League fans to New Zealand – as well as star player Brisbane Broncos team member and New Zealand Kiwis Captain, Adam Blair, who has cruised from Sydney to Auckland on the ship.

Ann Sherry, Executive Chairman of Carnival Australia and New Zealand, which operates P&O Cruises, said the arrival of the rugby league fans by sea was the perfect way to kick off the record season.

Pacific Pearl's five-month deployment will feature an unparalleled 20 cruises and will generate up to \$20 million in economic value for New Zealand.

"With the recent addition of two ships to our fleet, we've been able to significantly increase our presence in New Zealand to 20 cruises this year, compared to 10 in 2015," Ms Sherry said.

"As a result, this year P&O will more than double the number of passengers we carry on cruises from New Zealand, with a 122 per cent rise over our 2015 numbers, reflecting New Zealanders' growing passion for cruising."

Ms Sherry said Pacific Pearl's TransTasman cruise to the Downer NRL Auckland Nines was a great example of P&O creating unique itineraries to attract new audiences to New Zealand shores and benefit the nation's economy.

The Sydney to Auckland voyage to the Nines will increase the number of international visitors attending the highly anticipated Rugby League event. The ship's guests include almost 1000 Australians, with scores signing up for a special cruise package which included four nights in Auckland and access to the Nines.

Named in Auckland in 2010 by Olympian Barbara Kendall, the 1800-guest Pacific Pearl will be based in Auckland from 4 February to 23 June 2016. The ship's unprecedented season will feature 18 roundtrip cruises and two voyages between Sydney and Auckland.

Ms Sherry said Pacific Pearl's wide program of itineraries visiting 11 different New Zealand ports would also offer holidaymakers greater opportunities to explore their own backyard this year and generate an even bigger economic return to the country.

A highlight of its cruising schedule is a special 10-night circumnavigation of New Zealand calling at Napier, Wellington, Christchurch (Akaroa), and Picton and offering scenic cruising through Fiordland's stunning landscapes as well as the cruise line's maiden call to Stewart Island.

Ms Sherry said the cruise line was pleased that New Zealand will increasingly benefit from the long value chain of cruising as it continues to grow as a result of P&O Cruises' expansion.

P&O Cruises' expanded cruise program will create more opportunities for New Zealand food and beverage suppliers catering for cruises departing Auckland. Every turnaround cruise ship visit is estimated to deliver close to \$1 million to the local economy in passenger accommodation, dining, transport and shopping as well as crew expenditure, supplies and port charges. Meanwhile visits to regional cities can contribute up to \$500,000 in passenger and crew spending.

Auckland Tourism, Events and Economic Development Chief Executive Brett O'Riley said, "Auckland is experiencing a record cruise season, which is estimated to deliver \$251.7 million to the region. It's fantastic to see P&O now leveraging one of our city's major events and bringing Australian rugby league fans on a cruise to experience the Nines and everything else Auckland has to offer."

Itineraries on offer include:

- A three-night Food & Wine themed cruise from Auckland on June 10, 2016, priced from NZ\$399\* per person quad share
- A 10-night South Pacific cruise roundtrip from Auckland, departing May 16, 2016 with visits to Santo, Pentecoste, Vila and Mystery Island priced from NZ\$899\* per person quad share
- A 10-night Kiwi Explorer cruise roundtrip from Auckland, departing February 28, 2017 visits to Napier, Wellington, Akaroa, Stewart Island, Fiordland Park (scenic cruising) and Picton priced from NZ\$1199\* per person quad share

**For more information and bookings see a licensed travel agent, visit [pocruises.co.nz](http://pocruises.co.nz) or call 0800 780 716.**