



Australia's Latest Ship Pacific Aria Makes Maiden Call to Cairns

December 3, 2015

Cairns has welcomed Australia's latest cruise ship with P&O Cruises' Pacific Aria making her maiden call to the city today.

Heralded as a game-changer for the Australian cruise industry, the 55,820-tonne Pacific Aria docked at the Cairns Cruise Liner Terminal in the heart of the city this morning. Pacific Aria will remain in the city overnight, providing her 1500 guests with ample opportunity to explore Cairns and surrounds before departing tomorrow evening on her return journey to Brisbane.

The ship's two-day visit is expected to inject hundreds of thousands of dollars into the local economy through guest and crew spending and port charges. P&O Cruises was honoured to welcome on board Cairns Regional Council Mayor Cr Bob Manning and senior officials from Ports North.

Pacific Aria will return to Cairns on two further occasions this year (Dec 20-21 and Dec 30-31), while her sister ship Pacific Eden will make her maiden call to the city on December 22, in advance of her first season of cruises from Cairns in late 2016. The two ships will be regulars in Cairns making 17 calls between them in 2016, increasing to 30 calls in 2017.

Pacific Eden will be the first cruise ship to ever be based in Cairns when she sails from the city on a series of nine cruises between September and November 2016, including new seven-night cruises to Papua New Guinea. The ship will return to Cairns in 2017 for a second season of sailing, offering 10 cruises from Cairns from August to November 2017, including the first ever international sea break, a four-night cruise from Cairns to Papua New Guinea. Each season is expected to inject more than \$8 million into the local economy.

Pacific Aria and Pacific Eden joined the P&O Cruises fleet last month, with the ships named in a spectacular ceremony on Sydney Harbour which brought the cruise line's five-ship fleet together for the first time. The two latest ships take local cruising to the next level with a stunning design which reflects the contemporary style of modern Australia, while capturing the relaxed and sometimes cheeky spirit Australians are known for. The ships feature multiple dining options including a plush private dining room and Luke Mangan's Salt grill, luxe new bars, a resort-style pool deck and a child-free Oasis with private cabanas.

P&O Cruises Senior Vice President Sture Myrmell said the addition of Pacific Eden and Pacific Aria to the cruise line's fleet had enabled P&O to expand its home port offering across six different cities, including Cairns – P&O's first regional homeport.

"With the growth of our fleet we've not only been able to offer more cruises which visit great ports such as Cairns and Port Douglas, we've also been able to base a ship in Cairns so that north Queensland residents can enjoy cruises from their own doorstep," Mr Myrmell said.

“It’s great news for holidaymakers and it’s also wonderful news for the Queensland economy.”

In welcoming the ship to Cairns, Ports North Chairman Russell Beer said he was thrilled P&O’s latest ships were set to become regulars in the port.

“This is the first time a major cruise line has based itself in a regional Queensland city, and we are honoured to have Pacific Eden and Pacific Aria visiting the Port of Cairns during the peak cruise months.”

Tourism Tropical North Queensland Chief Executive Officer Alex de Waal said the arrival of Pacific Aria to Cairns was the start of a strong relationship with P&O's latest ships.

“With three visits to Cairns in December before her sister ship Pacific Eden arrives on December 22, Pacific Aria will bring a welcome economic boost to Tropical North Queensland in the lead up to what is expected to be a busy Christmas and New Year,” he said.

According to industry figures, Queensland is the second biggest source market for Australian cruisers with nearly 240,000 Queenslanders cruising in 2014, an increase of 21 per cent on the previous year.

Queensland is also home to more cruise destinations than any other state in Australia, with P&O ships now sailing to 11 destinations along its coast. In recent years P&O has opened up a range of new Queensland ports including Mooloolaba, Moreton Island and as of yesterday, Hamilton Island, while Gladstone and Fraser Island are set to be added in the coming months.

A seven-night Papua New Guinea cruise from Cairns on Pacific Eden starts from \$749* per person quad share.

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

*Price is per person quad share. Subject to availability, conditions apply.