



## **P&O Cruises Australia Prepares To Farewell Pacific Pearl And Announces Second New Zealand Cruise Season In 2017**

March 4, 2016

P&O Cruises Australia today announced a commercial arrangement has been reached to transfer Pacific Pearl from its fleet as part of an ongoing fleet expansion and renewal program.

The popular ship will be farewelled in April 2017. By then, Pacific Pearl will have completed 294 separate cruises under the P&O Cruises banner and will have carried more than half a million passengers over a period of more than five years" service.

The commercial transfer of the 1800-passenger ship is part of an unprecedented fleet renewal program for P&O Cruises, with the addition of Pacific Aria and Pacific Eden at the end of last year and Pacific Explorer due to join the fleet next year.

Long referred to as „New Zealand"s ship" and based out of Auckland for five months in 2016, Pacific Pearl will return for an initial 2017 cruise season from February to April next year.

Further asserting P&O Cruises commitment to the local market, and in response to the growing demand for cruising by New Zealanders, Pacific Jewel will arrive in New Zealand to complete a second season for the cruise line from September to November 2017 - the first ever Spring cruise season P&O Cruises has operated out of Auckland.

P&O Cruises Australia President Sture Myrmell said Pacific Pearl has made a huge contribution to the growth of the cruise category in New Zealand.

"In becoming a much loved passenger favourite, Pacific Pearl made a huge contribution to building the cruise category in the region particularly in New Zealand introducing thousands of holidaymakers to the joys of cruising," Mr Myrmell said.

"Over the past four years, we have grown the New Zealand season by more than 20 per cent and this year we are sailing from Auckland for a record 140 days."

"P&O Cruises remains the only cruise line to homeport from New Zealand and we are committed to the market and I am pleased to announce we will be returning in 2018.

"Following Pacific Pearl"s farewell in 2017, Pacific Jewel will become New Zealand"s ship and will sail from Auckland for two months from September 1 offering fantastic holidays to the Pacific Islands."

After her P&O Cruises launch in December 2010, Pacific Pearl played a game-changing part in becoming New Zealand"s first superliner beginning with an eight-night cruise from Auckland to the South Pacific.

The planned arrival of the 70,310 tonne Jewel will further increase opportunities for Kiwis to experience the cruising lifestyle, accommodating 2000 people in comparison to the Pearl's 1800 capacity.

Refurbished in 2015, Pacific Jewel boasts six superior dining options including Luke Mangan"s famous Salt Grill and The Pantry international food market, two stunning swimming pools and the largest Aqua HealthSpaFitness within the fleet.

It also features P&O Cruises" signature onboard attraction – P&OEdge Adventure Park, an outdoor Big Screen, a New Zealand Natural ice cream parlour, a Pandora Jewellery shop at sea, three-storey atrium, eight bars and lounges, a nightclub, whirlpool spas, a two-level child free Oasis retreat, interconnecting rooms, library, casino, showlounge, duty-free shopping and a dedicated chocolate shop.

Mr Myrmell said Pacific Pearl"s departure was part of the ongoing evolution of the P&O Cruises brand.

"Farewelling Pacific Pearl is a natural progression in which we are increasing the size of the fleet while redefining modern cruising in this part of the world.

"This is a very exciting time for P&O Cruises and our guests and is part of our long-term commitment to grow the cruise market."

Pacific Pearl"s last New Zealand cruise – a four night cruise to the Bay of Islands – will depart from Auckland on 23 March 2017. Her final P&O Cruises voyage will be a 16-day cruise to Singapore departing Auckland on March 27, 2017, which will provide an opportunity for Pacific Pearl's many fans to give her a celebratory farewell from the fleet.

With more than a year to go before Pacific Pearl exits the fleet, there are relatively few guests whose forward bookings will be subject to change and P&O will be assisting them to make alternative arrangements, including their choice of:

- Rebooking on an equivalent or near equivalent cruises on other P&O Cruises" ships
- Offering a choice of alternative cruises on other ships in the P&O Cruises" fleet where a near equivalent match is not possible
- Providing a full refund to guests for whom no alternative cruise choice is suitable (any guest whose cruise is cancelled can choose to obtain a full

refund).

Pacific Pearl will be transferred to a new fleet in early April 2017. At their request, details of the new operators will remain confidential.

**For further media enquiries, please contact:**

Contact: Libby Moffet

MG Media Communications

Ph: +61 2 9904 0011