



## **Cruise Boom Reaches Far North with Cairns' First Cruise Season**

September 12, 2016

P&O Cruises' Pacific Eden has made history, becoming the first cruise ship ever to be based in Cairns.

The 1500-guest ship, which set sail on her first roundtrip cruise from the city on Saturday (Sept 10), will call Cairns home until November 11, carrying an estimated 13,000 holidaymakers on nine cruises from the city, including to Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands.

The inaugural season is expected to deliver more than \$6 million to the State's economy in passenger and crew spending, provisioning and associated port charges.

With an estimated 40 per cent of guests travelling from interstate to join the Cairns' cruises, the two-month cruise season will provide a boost to local accommodation and travel operators, restaurants and cafes. According to industry figures, domestic cruisers spend an average \$483 a day on accommodation, shopping, dining and transport before boarding a ship in an Australian port.

Speaking in Cairns on Saturday, P&O Cruises Vice President Sales and Marketing Simon Cheng said Pacific Eden's deployment also supported Queensland suppliers who contribute large quantities of produce to the cruise line.

Since launching in 1932, P&O, Australia's only homegrown cruise line, has expanded to now offer five ships cruising year-round from eight homeports. In a move which is testament to the growing popularity of cruising in Queensland, it is the only State with two cruise homeports.

"We've had our eye on Cairns for many years and are thrilled to have the capacity to be able to base one of our latest ships in the city for the next two months. We have always seen Cairns as a cruising hot spot with great potential and Pacific Eden's mid-range size means she can berth at the cruise terminal right in the heart of the city providing a fantastic cruise experience for our guests," Mr Cheng said.

According to industry figures, Queensland is the second biggest source market for Australian cruisers with more than 280,000 Queenslanders cruising in 2015. 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 addition to launching Cairns as a new homeport, the cruise line has opened up a range of new Queensland ports in recent years including Gladstone and Fraser Island earlier this year.

"The city's far north location lends itself to a range of idyllic itineraries featuring Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands, and being one of Australia's most popular tropical destinations, Cairns is also a fantastic draw card on its own," Mr Cheng said.

Pacific Eden's 2016 Cairns season will feature eight roundtrip cruises and one repositional cruise. The ship will become a familiar sight in the far north with an even bigger encore season in 2017, featuring 10 cruises from Cairns from August to November. Fares for next year's Cairns season start

from \$1099\* per person quad share for a nine-night Papua New Guinea cruise departing Cairns on August 24, 2017, including up to \$350 onboard credit for Queensland residents.

\*Subject to availability, conditions apply.

**For more information visit [pocruises.com.au](http://pocruises.com.au), call 13 24 94 or see a licensed travel agent.**

**About P&O Cruises**

Sailing local waters for more than 80 years, P&O is Australia's only homegrown cruise line and the largest cruise operator in the region, offering a fleet of five ships cruising year round from eight home ports in Australia, New Zealand and Singapore. With a contemporary look and feel which captures the spirit of modern Australia, P&O's ships carry more than 460,000 guests a year on great value holidays. Itineraries range from short getaways and cruises exploring the Australian coast to longer holidays to the South Pacific and exotic destinations such as Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands and Asia. In June 2017 P&O Cruises will welcome its latest ship, Pacific Explorer, while in 2019 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 - the biggest cruise ship ever to be based fulltime in Australia.