



Melbourne to Benefit as Cunard Announces Record Australian Season for Queen Elizabeth

February 18, 2018

Luxury cruise line Cunard has announced it will base its world famous ship Queen Elizabeth in Australia for an unprecedented 101-day summer season, in a move set to deliver significant economic benefits to Victoria.

The cruise line today revealed that Melbourne will be the key homeport for Queen Elizabeth during her record 2019-20 season in Australian waters.

Queen Elizabeth will arrive in Melbourne on December 14, 2019 and will be based in the city for two months, departing February 15, 2020. During that time, she will sail on six roundtrip cruises from the Victorian capital, with close to \$7 million expected to be injected into the local economy across a range of areas including guest and crew spending, provisioning and port fees and charges.

The 2020 Australian deployment will be almost double the length of Queen Elizabeth's scheduled 54-day 2019 season Down Under, which will feature four roundtrip cruises from Melbourne and a total of five visits to the city, as well as three roundtrip cruises from Sydney, during February-March next year.

Cunard Senior Vice President Simon Palethorpe said Queen Elizabeth's record 2020 season reflected the importance of the Australian cruise market to Cunard as well as Melbourne's growing attraction as a cruise hub.

"Over the past few years we've seen unprecedented growth in demand for the Cunard experience in Australia so it made sense for us to invest further in the market and extend the sailing season of Queen Elizabeth even more in 2020," Mr Palethorpe said.

"We're thrilled that our longer season also means we can spend more time cruising from Melbourne, a city that has always been popular with our guests."

Mr Palethorpe said the December arrival of the 2080-guest Queen Elizabeth meant she would spend Christmas in local waters – a first for Cunard's current fleet of Queens.

Travellers will be able to sail from Melbourne to New Zealand over the festive break with Christmas Day spent cruising the Tasman Sea, Boxing Day in the tranquil waters of Fiordland National Park and New Year's Eve in Auckland Harbour, enjoying the world's first firework spectacular as a new decade begins. Other itineraries available from Melbourne will include cruises to South Australia and Tasmania.

Following her two-month Melbourne deployment, Queen Elizabeth will sail to Sydney where she will cruise on two roundtrip voyages from the city before heading north. Her Sydney offerings will include a new 14-night cruise to Papua New Guinea, including the cruise line's maiden calls to the beautiful Conflict Islands and Kiriwina in the Trobriand Islands.

Cunard will release full details of Queen Elizabeth's itineraries on March 13 prior to the program going on sale on March 20, 2018.

According to industry statistics, the economic benefits flowing to Victoria from cruising rose 12 per cent in 2016-17, to reach \$390 million. With Australia ranking as one of the fastest

growing cruise passenger markets in the world, the number of Victorians taking a cruise holiday continues to surge, reaching 215,817 in 2016 – up almost 25 per cent on 2015.

At 90,900 tonnes, Queen Elizabeth is the second largest ship ever to sail in Cunard's fleet. Launched in 2010, she is also the youngest in the cruise line's current trio of Queens with features including more than 10 restaurants and cafes, a Games Deck featuring paddle tennis, croquet and bowls, a two-storey library, a ballroom and a three-deck Royal Court Theatre seating 800 guests and offering private boxes.

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Assets library including b-roll, imagery and additional media materials available here: <https://tinyurl.com/y83yuexv>

About Cunard

Cunard is a luxury British cruise line based at Carnival House in Southampton, owned by Carnival Corporation since 1998. It has been a leading operator of passenger ships on the North Atlantic, celebrating 175 years of operation in 2015. There are three Cunard Queens in its fleet - Queen Mary 2, Queen Elizabeth and Queen Victoria. For more information, please see www.cunard.com

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