



P&O Cruises Australia's Fleet in Shape for Bounce Back: Pacific Adventure and Pacific Encounter Join First Half of 2021

October 21, 2020

Australia's home-grown cruise line, P&O Cruises Australia, today announced the next stage of its fleet transformation with both Pacific Adventure and Pacific Encounter arriving in the first half of 2021 in a mark of confidence in the expected rebound of the local cruise industry.

The much-anticipated Pacific Adventure is planned to begin sailing from Sydney on April 30 next year and the delivery of Pacific Encounter is being brought forward by at least six months to ensure the local fleet is poised to drive the resurgence of cruising at the right time.

Pacific Encounter is scheduled to call Brisbane home from May 7, 2021 – but additional voyages may be added even earlier, depending on the timing of the return of cruising in Australia.

The sister ships will sail alongside P&O's current flagship, Pacific Explorer, which will extend its operational pause until January next year.

"The arrival of these much-anticipated ships, Pacific Adventure and Pacific Encounter, in the first half of next year represents a step-change for the fleet and a sign of confidence in the market," P&O Cruises Australia President Sture Myrmell said.

"This investment in our fleet is a demonstration that P&O Cruises Australia is ready to lead the industry in bouncing back when government and public health authorities agree it is appropriate to begin sailing again with protocols in place.

"It is also a mark of respect for our many loyal guests as well as crew, fresh food suppliers, entertainers and musicians, shore tour operators and port logistics partners who are looking to be a part of the resurgence of the Australian cruise sector over time."

Mr Myrmell said both Pacific Adventure and Pacific Encounter will offer something for everyone from a range of inclusive dining options, speciality restaurants by renowned chefs Luke Mangan and Johnny Di Francesco as well as family-friendly activities and vibrant night-time venues brought to life by some of Australia's leading comedians, musicians and our own talented entertainment staff.

In recent weeks, P&O Cruises Australia announced the early departure of much-loved favourites Pacific Dawn and Pacific Aria. It had previously been announced the ships would leave as part of a fleet transformation.

"These have been challenging times for the entire community and, for our part, we have sought to use this operational pause to fast-track our planned fleet refresh. Our pathway to a return to cruising may be unclear but we wanted to give our guests confidence about our future fleet and our commitment to Australia and New Zealand," Mr Myrmell said.

Key elements of today's announcement include:

- Pacific Adventure will call Sydney home. Her first voyage is a three-night Short Break scheduled for April 30, 2021. Pacific Adventure was originally planned to debut in November this year but was delayed due to the global COVID-19 pandemic.
- Brisbane's new international cruise terminal will become the new home port for Pacific Encounter. At this stage, her first voyage is scheduled to depart Brisbane on May 7, 2021 and is a three-night Short Break. Additional voyages may be added earlier.
- Pacific Explorer is planned to be homeporting from Auckland, New Zealand from February 6, 2021 to her last voyage on April 25, 2021.
- Extending the pause for Pacific Explorer until the end of the year, covering her Christmas and New Year cruises from Brisbane, to give certainty for guests over this important holiday period. Pacific Explorer's first cruise is now scheduled for January 9, 2021.

"While the current pause in cruise operations is until 17 December in Australia, the pathway to re-start remains unclear. We felt the best approach was to cancel Pacific Explorer's remaining 2020 cruises to allow families to plan with certainty for their Christmas and New Year activities. It was a difficult decision but in the end it was an effort to do the right thing by our guests on both Pacific Explorer and Pacific Adventure, which is also affected over the holiday period," Mr Myrmell said.

P&O Cruises Australia will assist those guests whose bookings have been affected by the changes. Guests can choose alternative arrangements including an option to move their booking to the same time next year and receive bonus onboard credit, request a full refund or bonus onboard credit if they choose the future cruise credit option.

P&O will pay refunds back to travel agents for guests who booked through that sales channel. The cruise line will also protect travel agent commissions on all bookings for cancelled cruises that were paid in full as at October 21, 2020 and for the total amount of the future cruise credits.

Looking ahead, Pacific Adventure and Pacific Encounter will have the signature experiences, entertainment and programmed activities that sets apart P&O as a contemporary cruise holiday for everyone.

Due to the complexities created by COVID, the waterslides will be installed at a later date but the ships will be a step change with a mix of fresh offerings, such as Byron Beach Club and the family pool area. With a retractable roof for all weather, the pool area is set to be one of the most popular areas on the ships with loads of family-oriented activities around the deck.

All the favourite dining options that guests love will continue such as The Pantry, Waterfront, Angelos, Dragon Lady, 400 Gradi and Luke Mangan's restaurant and grill. The best production shows at sea will be showcased in Black Circus and fantastic music and performances throughout the other entertainment venues, Blue Room, bars and pubs onboard both ships. P&O will remain a major supporter of live Aussie comedy, a sector which has suffered in recent months.

The ships will also have Edge activities, kids clubs, top-class boutiques and a range of programmed events.

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