



P&O Cruises Australia Pauses to April 2022 Marking a Full Two Years' Suspension of Operations Continuing Profound Disappointment for Guests

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Expressing profound disappointment for guests and concern at no agreed restart plan for cruising, P&O Cruises Australia has today extended its pause until mid-April 2022, marking a full two years suspension of its operations.

The extended pause cancels cruises scheduled to depart from 3 March, 2022 until 16 April, 2022 from Sydney and Brisbane further affecting the holiday plans of cruise guests.

This marks the twenty-third cruise cancellation announcement since P&O Cruises Australia's rolling pause began in March 2020 in response to the pandemic.

President of P&O Cruises Australia Sture Myrmell said that during this entire period guests had displayed incredible patience and loyalty to P&O and cruising.

"However, as we approach the two-year mark in our rolling pause in operations, it is understandable that our guests will be very disappointed and frustrated that there is still no agreed restart plan for cruising in Australia," Mr Myrmell said.

"Federal and state governments are yet to outline their requirements for restart despite the nation's high vaccination rate, the cruise industry's comprehensive health protocols, vaccination policies for guests and crew and the successful resumption of cruising in other international markets.

"Our loyal guests, travel agents and many suppliers whose businesses depend on cruising along with thousands of jobs are simply looking for certainty so that they can plan for the future. Reaching this two-year anniversary is discouraging for so many of them."

The Federal Government last Friday extended Australia's cruise ban by another two months to next February in what the industry body, Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA), described as a "devastating blow" to the 18,000 Australians whose livelihoods depend on cruise tourism.

However, as previously stated, even after a resumption plan and operating requirements are understood and agreed with governments, it will take several months to prepare for a return.

"After an absence of two years, it will take us several months and significant cost to manage the complex logistics necessary to return a ship to service before sailing back to Australian waters," Mr Myrmell said.

"This includes engaging our crew and re-training them to meet new operating protocols when they are known as well as re-stocking the ship with local fresh produce and refreshing onboard guest service operations that have also been on-hold for such a long time.

"It is a big task and we need to understand the operating environment before we begin the process of returning. To date, no government authority, federal or state, has provided feedback on the industry's proposed operational guidelines to enable an informed decision on bringing our ships back to Australia."

Guests whose bookings are affected by the latest pause announcement will be notified of the pause and options available either directly or via their appointed travel agent.

Guests can track the progress of their future cruise credit or refund request via the tracking tool found on P&O's website at www.pocruises.com.au.

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