



**AUSTRALIAN
CRUISE**
ASSOCIATION

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Australian Cruise Association **NEWS**

In this issue:

- Message from the Chairman
- Gladstone announces \$29.5M expansion
- Reef Pilots – Enhancement of Services
- Cruise Wollongong Ambassadors win Australia Day award
- World class events in South Australia
- Newcastle has exciting times ahead
- Captain Cook Cruises adds two new catamarans
- South Australia a buzz with maiden calls
- Fantasea Cruising introduces spectacular new vessel
- Shore tension units secure millions of tourist dollars for Geraldton
- Kangaroo Island arrivals
- Tassie's biggest cruise season ever!
- Phillip Island welcomes cruise ships and showcases the best of wildlife
- Red Carpet rolled out for Queen Mary 2 Maiden Visits
- Noumea Discovery Inbound shapes up for a busy season
- Passport to Portland makes visiting easy
- Eden & the Sapphire Coast – nature's unspoilt playground
- Sunshine Coast celebrates 50th anniversary
- Geelong and the Bellarine welcoming Cruise Ships
- Port Adelaide Passenger Terminal and surrounds



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Message from the Chairman

Our newsletter is evidence of the exciting times for cruise in our region and the commitment of governments, local councils and ACA members to the cruise sector.

The number of maiden cruise calls to our ports and anchorages this year has been a standout with local communities embracing the visits.

We continue to work with destinations to develop quality and unique experiences to enhance the total cruise package.

We are focused on working with our port and government members to ensure that infrastructure developments keep pace with the continual growth.

Seatrade Cruise Global event in the coming week continues to be an important calendar event for ACA, where we look forward to sharing further destination developments and incentives to enhance the buoyant industry.

We will be presenting our destinations with Cruise New Zealand, Papua New Guinea and New Caledonia so visit booth #1813 for all the latest.

Our annual Down Under BBQ will also be held on Wednesday 15 March from 3-5pm, so join us for our traditional hospitality.

Stephen Bradford
Chairman

Gladstone announces \$29.5M East Shore Stage 1B expansion

Gladstone Ports Corporation (GPC) has welcomed the announcement by Premier Anastasia Palaszczuk approving the \$29.5M East Shores Stage 1B development including a new cruise passenger interface, with works expected to commence in the second half of 2017.

With the support of the State Government GPC will provide \$7.5M in addition to the already secured corporate funding of \$22M, enabling the \$29.5M development to progress.

GPC Chairman, Leo Zussino said the funds will be used to extend the already established multi-award winning recreational precinct, facilitating the completion of the \$75M Auckland East Shores parklands for the Gladstone community to enjoy.

continued on page 2

Reef Pilots – Enhancement of Services

Australian Reef Pilots have traditionally provided pilotage services to the cruise industry. From originally assisting in the navigation of a ship in difficult and sometimes dangerous waters, the pilot's role on the bridge has developed into that of an independent member of the bridge team, advising, monitoring and managing risk, particularly to the environment.

While the pilot's traditional role of protecting the ship from the environment is still important, it's not a cliché to suggest that his main focus now is on protecting the environment from the ship. Hence whether sailing in a compulsory or non-compulsory pilotage area the role remains essential.

Reef pilots are now carried in an expanded area of operation stretching from the Kimberleys in the west, right through the Northern Territory and the coastal waters of Arnhem Land to the Great Barrier Reef, through the fabulous Whitsunday Islands and Hervey Bay (Kingfisher Resort) and beyond. Even further afield, our work in Papua New Guinea has increased as cruise companies realise the almost untapped tourist resource that this country's natural wonders provide.

With the huge increase in cruise ship numbers, the demand for our pilotage services has grown to the extent that we have found it necessary to train a select number of pilots as cruise ship specialists. These pilots undertake extra licencing, maintain a deep knowledge of GBRMPA regulations, have enhanced knowledge of the areas in which the cruise ships operate, and have at hand recent information regarding the health of the Great Barrier Reef obtained from reliable independent environmental sources.

Since the pilot is engaged to sail on board for extended periods, it is only sensible to use this time to maximum effect. We know that guests are sponges for knowledge and the reef pilot, in his unique role on board, is an ideal source. More recently, Australian

Reef Pilots have been approached to design and advise on itineraries throughout our area of operation and the company will now provide this service on a more formalised basis.

These attributes will now be promoted as a part of our offering to the cruise industry and are included in the existing fee structure.

Our Cruise Co-Ordinator, Captain Wel Gamble, will again be visiting Seatrade Fort Lauderdale this year and looks forward to discussing this enhancement of the services of Australian Reef Pilots with clients.

continued from previous page

Gladstone announces \$29.5M East Shore Stage 1B expansion

"Stage 1A of the East Shores Precinct was completed in 2014, providing the community with exceptional access to the Gladstone Harbour and a world-class recreational facility. This additional funding will be used to extend the parklands and complete Stage 1B," Mr Zussino said.

The funding will facilitate the construction of a cruise passenger interface at our Auckland Point wharf facility, to cater for our fast growing cruise tourism industry.

"Stage 1B includes the development of an Interpretive Centre, a waterfront café, a revamped and much larger

Patsy Lee Place fishing platform, an amphitheatre and the Gladstone Maritime Museum."

The Interpretive Centre will be the cornerstone of Stage1B celebrating the rich history of GPC, the Port of Gladstone maritime industry and the culture of the Traditional Owners of the region.

For more information visit GPC's website www.gpcl.com.au

Cruise Wollongong Ambassadors win Australia Day award

What started out as an idea over a beer to connect older residents with a cruise ship visit has resulted in almost 500 volunteers being mobilised to welcome 15,000 visitors from three Royal Caribbean mega-liners!

To celebrate their efforts, The Cruise Wollongong Volunteer Ambassador Program took home the Community Group Award at the Wollongong Australia Day Awards for 2017 in recognition of its contribution to the region.

General Manager of Destination Wollongong, Mark Sleigh, is used to overseeing region-wide initiatives, but said the Volunteer Ambassador Program was one of the best examples of regional collaboration that he's seen.

"The whole concept behind the Ambassador program was to use the passion and pride our local community have in our wonderful city to give our cruise visitors an experience they would never forget. If one of our visitors had asked a volunteer where they should

get a cup of coffee, they would have received 488 different answers, and that is what made the program unique, it was driven by personal experience and recommendation".

"The Program worked because of two things; teamwork and good old fashion 'roll-up your sleeves' hard work," he said. "Everyone at IRT and Destination Wollongong got behind the idea, and we had great local sponsors, logistics and media partners.

Cancer Council NSW, Glenburnie Orchid, Kollaras Trading Company, Print Media, Rotary Wollongong, Westpac Banking Corporation and Wollongong Golf Club pitched in to ensure the Ambassadors were kitted out, fed and watered. The program grew after each event with more and more local businesses wanting to get on board to support the program.

Logistically it was a complex operation. The ships docked at Port Kembla 10kms

out of town and between 3000-4000 visitors were bused into a city centre park, where they were welcomed and assisted by our volunteers.

AAT Terminals, NSW Ports, Premier Buses and The Ports Authority of NSW worked with Intercruises and Royal Caribbean to ensure a seamless journey from Port to Park.

"One of our IRT customers, who is in his eighties, worked all day at the registration stand handing out bottles of water. It was amazing! He said it was just so great to be out of the house. Social isolation is a real issue amongst our older citizens so programs like this are a great way to help them reconnect with their community."

The duo is looking forward to continuing the Program's success in 2017, with the fourth Royal Caribbean cruise ship expected to dock later in the year.



World class events in South Australia

When itinerary planning, consider the fantastic opportunities for passengers offered by Adelaide's amazing calendar of events.

From Christmas pageants and World Tour cycling races to arts, food and wine, feel free to ask us anytime whether there is a special event on a specific date.

January is Tour Down Under month, offering world class cycling featuring

the biggest names on both the men's and women's tours.

Don't forget to take a look at what's on in March every year – Adelaide in March is THE place to be! The famous Adelaide Festival of Arts offers a wide range of exciting events. Added to that is the

fun and frivolity of the annual Fringe Festival, with venues and shows all over town. There's also the autumn horse racing carnival including the Adelaide Cup, and the Clipsal 500 V8 races. In March you have a city full of action, fun and excitement.

Newcastle has exciting times ahead

2017 will be an exciting year as plans for the Port of Newcastle cruise terminal take shape and the community welcomes familiar cruise ships back to Newcastle, located approximately 70 nautical miles north of Sydney.

"This is certainly an exciting time for the port and the Hunter region's tourism industry. Over the next 18 months we will welcome 18 cruise ships, install new mooring bollards to host bigger ships, and build a cruise terminal," said Geoff Crowe, Port of Newcastle CEO.

The cruise terminal upgrade project received \$12.7 million in funding through the NSW Government's Restart NSW Hunter Infrastructure Investment Fund. Planning for the cruise terminal is well advanced and will progress to the design phase by mid-year. The project includes wharf infill enhancements to support turnaround operations such as stevedoring and ship provisioning, and a car park.

The installation of new mooring bollards also received an additional \$400,000 in funding from the NSW Government and \$400,000 from the Australian Government and is expected to be complete by mid-2017, with work to be scheduled around cruise ship visits.

The Port of Newcastle recently conducted a dredging campaign that resulted in the depth of the cruise berth being promulgated at 10.0 metres to better accommodate deeper draft vessels.

Terminal construction is due to be completed by the end of 2018. The port will continue to provide a warm welcome to cruise ships during the construction period with minimal impact on guests and cruise operators.



Captain Cook Cruises adds two new innovative catamarans to fleet

SeaLink Travel Group has unveiled its' \$2 million investment, twin passenger catamarans, *MV Blackwattle Bay* and *MV Cockle Bay*. The catamarans are the first of their kind to join the Captain Cook Cruises Sydney Harbour fleet.

MV Blackwattle Bay and *MV Cockle Bay*, are an innovative design; light weight, efficient, 12 metre boats which are small and highly maneuverable, and have the capacity to carry 60 passengers. They are low wash and like the rest of the fleet are fuel efficient, eco-friendly, and equipped with the latest technologies to reduce their carbon footprint.

According to Managing Director, SeaLink Travel Group, Jeff Ellison

"At a time when Sydney's road congestion is creating significant challenges for both government and commuters, *MV Blackwattle Bay* and *MV Cockle Bay* will offer a welcome solution, opening new inner city routes and offering regular high speed travel to commuters, conference delegates and visitors to the city".

For further information visit: www.captaincook.com.au



South Australia abuzz with maiden calls

The season has seen a record number of maiden calls to the state, kicked off with the *Maasdam* visiting Adelaide on Saturday 12 November.

Things really ramped up when the *Ovation of the Seas* arrived on Sunday 12 December 2016, her second port of call in Australia.

On a glorious day in Adelaide, *Ovation of the Seas* arrived early to a water canon 'salute', and our regular bush band "Ewe-calyptus" delivering rousing renditions of bush ballads to get the

toes tapping. The army of fantastic volunteers provided their usual excellent help to passengers and crew. The largest turnaround ever to occur in Adelaide, with 1600 passengers disembarking and more than 1800 embarking, as well as 2500 transit passengers through the terminal was a great success.

Premier Weatherill presented gifts to the Captain at the plaque ceremony and we welcomed RCCL Australia and NZ Managing Director Adam Armstrong, as well as numerous other RCCL representatives from Sydney and Miami.

The beautiful *Europa 2* made her maiden call to South Australia in December, visiting Adelaide on 31 December and Kangaroo Island on 1 January 2017.

The *Queen Mary 2* wrapped up the maiden calls with her first ever visit to Kangaroo Island on Monday 20 February.

The itinerary options in Port Lincoln, Adelaide and Kangaroo Island are proving to be great offerings to cruise line itineraries.

Fantasea Cruising introduces spectacular new vessel

Just prior to Christmas, Fantasea Cruising launched the newest addition to its ever-expanding water taxi fleet.

The shiny new 16-seat vessel increases the company's water taxi fleet to 12 vessels, with several more vessels scheduled to arrive in early 2017. Complete with bar fridge and toilet the new water taxi will further increase Fantasea Cruising's focus on servicing the small group market.

Fantasea Cruising CEO Anthony Hayes said: "This is the most luxurious water taxi ever launched on Sydney Harbour. We've been excited to note the growing need for small group VIP touring on the harbour. Our industry partners are

increasingly in need of options for small group bespoke cruising, with complete flexibility for discerning groups and families. Book with us and you can design your own private cruise... whenever, wherever and whatever you want to experience."

Fantasea Cruising operates a fleet of 26 vessels on Sydney Harbour, Pittwater, Townsville and beyond. Cruise experiences include the Classic Aussie Cruise, whale watching, sightseeing, charters and build your own cruise options.

Shore tension units to secure millions of tourist dollars for Geraldton



The availability of four Shore Tension Units (STUs) at the Geraldton port will ensure more cruise tourists than ever before have the chance to experience the city and surrounds, providing valuable economic benefits to the region.

City of Greater Geraldton Mayor, Shane Van Styn said cruise ship visits have a huge impact on the local economy and the Shore Tension Units would make their visits to the city safer and more frequent.

"Last financial year 14 cruise ships visited Geraldton where almost 16,000 passengers came ashore and spent more than \$4.1 million in Geraldton and the Midwest region," he said.

"Regrettably, over the last four years, 18 cruise ships cancelled their visit on the day of arrival due to poor anchorage conditions which has resulted in an estimated \$6.2 million loss in economic activity, including the loss of revenue for local businesses.

"However, the days of cancelled cruise ship visits are now numbered as the STUs will provide safe and reliable berthing services for cruise ships."

STUs apply constant mooring line pressure to dampen the movement of moored vessels. This effectively

minimises gangway movement and will allow cruise ships to dock and disembark passengers safely in the vast majority of sea conditions.

MidWest Ports Authority (MWPA) Chief Executive Officer Peter Klein said the STUs, in addition to providing a reliable service to cruise vessels, would also improve the Port's ability to reduce delays to cargo vessel operations caused by harbour surge.

"Harbour surge currently results in the loss of approximately 30 days per year," he said. "Recent trials indicate that the deployment of STU's to secure cargo vessels during surge events should substantially reduce the frequency and cost of port closures to cargo operations due to surge. This has the potential to provide a significant benefit to port users and will improve overall port efficiency."

The State Government has approved MWPA spending up to \$1.8 million on the procurement and set-up for the deployment of four STUs.

Kangaroo Island arrivals - Penneshaw

Kangaroo Island was scheduled to receive 19 cruise ship visits during the 2016-17 season.

Unfortunately, a forecast for very strong winds forced *Maasdam* to divert from her planned maiden call on November 13, 2016. (This was the first time weather had caused a call to be aborted since the introduction of the new tender platforms in Penneshaw).

From 10 visits last season to 18 for the current season, Tourism Kangaroo Island, with support from the SA Tourism Commission, (SATC) is managing a fantastic Meet and Greet service for cruise ship passengers and crew arriving on Kangaroo Island.

We have a new partnership with Flinders University, with students rostered to assist with Meet and Greet services as part of their tourism studies, supporting the local volunteers.

SATC has commissioned a survey of cruise passengers and crew visiting Kangaroo Island, to better understand satisfaction levels and expenditure patterns.

Vessels can anchor close to shore and the tender journey is less than 10 minutes.

When planning a cruise ship visit to Kangaroo Island, it is wise to remember that Penneshaw itself is a small town. The island community throws open its doors to cruise visitors, offering entertainment, arts, crafts and warm hospitality, as well as a cruise ship market on the town oval – a pleasant 400 metre walk from the wharf. The island is larger than many expect and is without public transport (taxis and bus services), so tours or pre-booked hire cars are essential to travel further afield.

Tassie's biggest cruise season ever!

Tassie's biggest cruise season ever is well under way, with a record 95 port call bookings across Hobart, Burnie and the anchorages of Port Arthur and Coles Bay.

Hobart welcomed *Ovation of the Seas* four times this season. Much excitement surrounded the maiden call on 13 December, with welcome entertainment and the official plaque ceremony opening with a moving 'Welcome to Country,' sung by acclaimed Aboriginal musician Dwayne Everett-Smith.

The most recent visit was during the Australian Wooden Boat Festival, when passengers mingled with approximately 220,000 visitors on the Hobart Waterfront for a vibrant program of entertainment and fun, special guests, Tasmanian food and drink, demonstrations, races and displays.

The World also visited Tasmania this season staying in Tasmanian waters for eight nights, including an overnight stay in Burnie, four nights in Hobart and a very well-received visit to Flinders Island.

Preparations are underway for P&O's Dark Mofo Cruise in June, and more exciting developments are planned for the season ahead.

A \$12 million expansion and revamp of the Port Arthur Visitor Centre will help cater for the strong growth in visitation,



including the 31 cruise ship visits booked for 2017/18. The site will remain open throughout the construction period. The project, due for completion in December 2017 will see a new-look dining experience for both cafeteria and bistro offerings and updated interpretation and gallery space to better present the amazing stories that lie in the site beyond.

Another new experience enjoyed by cruise passengers this season was at Shene Estate at Pontville near Hobart. This iconic convict-forged property is home to the Shene Estate Distillery, makers of Poltergeist Gin and triple distilled Mackey Single Malt Whisky. Passengers were treated to customised custodian tours of this historic site and living museum.

Phillip Island welcomes cruise ships and showcases the best of wildlife

This year Phillip Island, 88 nautical miles from Melbourne surround by the waters of Bass Strait and Western Port Bay, welcomed four ships anchoring off Rhyll on the north side of the island.

Phillip Island is renowned for its wildlife, in particular thousands of Little Penguins that come ashore each night at Summerland Beach.

Cruise ship visitors were delighted to see Koalas in their natural habitat at the Koala Conservation Centre and experience the thrill of a high speed 90 minute boat ride along Phillip Island's rugged and spectacular coastline to enjoy a close up encounter with one of Australia's largest colonies of fur seals.



The wildlife viewing continued with visitors having the opportunity to watch Shearwater birds returning to their clifftop rookeries at sunset.

Phillip Island has a range of restaurants many serving local seafood and produce adding to the potential to become an essential part of all cruise itineraries calling to Melbourne.

Red Carpet rolled out for Queen Mary 2 Maiden Visits

The famed *Queen Mary 2* (QM2) anchored in Geographe Bay on Monday 13 February 2017 to kick off her first of many maiden calls to Australian ports and anchorages.

The QM2 anchored near Busselton Jetty and over 2,000 passengers disembarked via tender utilising the new purpose-built berthing platforms on the Busselton Jetty.

This visit to Busselton introduced passengers from across the globe to the best of what the Busselton Margaret River Region has to offer – fine food and wine, beautiful scenery, history, culture, art and craft.

Mayor Henley said: "The QM2 is one of the most admired and famous ocean liners in the world. Attracting her to the region is a significant achievement. This visit from the QM2 marked an important coming of age for the region in terms of establishing Geographe Bay as a world-class destination point for cruise ships."

The QM2 visited Tasmania for the first time as part of a sold out five night cruise departing from and returning to Sydney.

A highlight was the maiden call to Port Arthur where the famous World Heritage Site put on a spectacular day.

Passengers aboard large ships have been disembarking at Port Arthur since the first brig carrying convicts to the site arrived in 1830. Dr. John Russell, the first Commandant of Port Arthur wrote to the Lieutenant Governor of the colony and noted "*Port Arthur forms a fine capacious harbour in which a large fleet might ride in safety, sheltered from every wind*".

The naturally deep harbour contributed to Port Arthur's ability to operate for 47 years as a penal settlement with

hundreds of ships delivering convicts, cargo, visitors and officials. The same deep harbour is what has drawn Cunard Line to bring *Queen Mary 2* to the now famous World Heritage Site.

Director Tourism Operations at Port Arthur Historic Site Management Authority (PAHSMA) and Australian Cruise Association Committee Member Anne McVilly said "Port Arthur Historic Site welcomed the ship with a traditional and authentic greeting as would have been provided by the Commandant of the Colony to visiting dignitaries when the site was in full operation in the 1830s."

"The Commandant and Superintendent welcomed passengers onshore between 0845 and 1000 and, in keeping with maritime traditions Port Arthur Historic Site Management Authority presented the ship with a plaque to commemorate this significant occasion."

The QM2 also made maiden calls to Hobart and Kangaroo Island where the communities warmly welcomed her and her guests.

Noumea Discovery Inbound shapes up for a busy season

It is a very busy summer season for Noumea Discovery Inbound, the official tour operator for most cruise ships calling to Noumea, with an average 25 cruise ships per month in Noumea, New Caledonia.

During this time we have welcomed several inaugural calls such as *Ovation of the Seas*, *Emerald Princess* and *Costa Atlantica* (the first Chinese charter cruise calling to Noumea).

Noumea Discovery Inbound is proud to be the official tour operator for all major cruise lines.

All of our coaches are low emission Euro5 - as per European regulations, including four wheelchair friendly vehicles (capacity one chair per bus), unique in New Caledonia. We have four yellow Tchou Tchou trains as well as minibuses and private cars. The total capacity of our transport is over 1200 passengers at one time.

In addition to regular calls from Carnival Australia and Royal Caribbean, we are busy preparing for the upcoming visit of Hapag Lloyd's *MS Europa* and *Bremen*, the prestigious ship *The World* and Oceania Cruises' *Sirena*.

Passport to Portland Makes Visiting Easy

A new tourism brochure is acting as a one-stop shop for cruise ship passengers visiting Portland, Victoria providing a guide on all of the key tourist sites in the seaside town.

The Passport to Portland and Surrounds was launched during the recent P&O visit earlier this month receiving rave reviews from passengers.

Produced by the Glenelg Shire Council in conjunction with South West TAFE students and Portland Tourist Association, the informative brochure includes a map of the Portland township with advertorials on key tourism operators, retail outlets and eateries.

A key feature of the publication is vouchers from retailers providing cruise ship passengers with free coffee deals and discounted meals and accommodation.

Glenelg Shire Council tourism and events coordinator, Liz McKinnon said more than 80 businesses featured in the publication which would be used for the 2017 cruise ship season.

"For each cruise ship visit, council recruits tourism students from TAFE and local volunteer ambassadors to provide exclusively tailored showbags for our visitors packed with helpful information, discount offers and souvenirs," she said.

"These maps put all of this information into one DL sized brochure that can fit into a visitor's pocket. Importantly, it is something they can take back onboard



and use as a souvenir of their visit to show to friends and family, playing an important role in our marketing plan.

"Furthermore, the brochure encourages visitors to Portland to use the popular #iamportland hashtag to share their on-shore memories on social media."

Portland is recognised for its' carnival celebrations on cruise ship days which include local markets featuring more than 140 stallholders and sand sculpture artists. Free shuttle buses transport passengers throughout the CBD.

Building on this success, the Council has worked with local business owners to add a new kayak and bike hire service, boat tours of Portland Bay including the industrial working port, and adrenaline racing motorbike rides along winding local coast roads.

Ms McKinnon said Council was focused on building its on-shore experiences to ensure it continued to attract cruise vessels and receive high ratings from passengers well into the future.

Eden and the Sapphire Coast – nature's unspoilt playground

When cruise visitors catch their first glimpse of the Port of Eden, they are greeted by a view of unspoilt nature.

Twofold Bay is the world's third deepest natural harbour, and home to a seafood industry that is one of the biggest suppliers to the Sydney Fish Markets.

Each visitor is warmly greeted by our friendly volunteers and tourism students, who offer a welcome bag containing local and destination guides. It's a special welcome, and one that leaves a lasting impression. *The World's* return in January 2016 is proof of that.

Cruise Eden has welcomed 48 ships since operations began in 2005. The business has grown to include 18 tours, many of which focus on the Sapphire Coast landscapes and the harvest from sea and shore.

International cruise lines can make the Port of Eden their first stop, with full customs clearance facilities offering greater flexibility with booking capacity in larger city ports.

In our regional port, our forte is nature-based experiences, and nature lovers can enjoy day trips, or multi-day treks, with or without a guide.

Our focus is on service. Kiah Wilderness Tours for example offer kayak and camping tours which include great coffee made with rainwater, scented hand towels before meals, and personalised communications pre and post experience.

Guided tours also include Australia's Coastal Wilderness Adventures' ocean to plate snorkelling experiences where you learn to catch and prepare abalone, crayfish, mussels and more; oyster experiences on and off the water at Pambula and Merimbula lakes, and cooking schools in a stunning beachfront home.



Even in summer, it's not hard to find a beach where the only footprints are your own, and maybe those of a goanna. There are around 150 beaches and lagoons across 170 kilometres of coastline, and 400 kilometres of estuarine foreshore. Of the vast eucalypt forests, rugged headlands and rich wetlands, 70% are protected by national parks and nature reserves. It's so diverse that UNESCO declared a World Biosphere Reserve in some parts almost 40 years ago.

There's rewarding retail therapy too, with ethical clothing and giftware, weekly produce markets, experiences at farm gates, wineries and breweries, art

galleries and if you like more traditional recreation there are wildlife and adventure parks, five golf courses within an hour's drive, movies and festivals.

So, it's easy to immerse yourself in nature-based adventures but there's plenty of opportunity to get amongst it with the locals too.

Eden, on the Sapphire Coast is halfway between Sydney and Melbourne.

Visit www.cruiseeden.com.au

Sunshine Coast looks to 'sunny' future as it celebrates 50th anniversary

On 20 January, 2017 the Sunshine Coast officially turned 50 and celebrated the anniversary with a series of events across the region, along with the commencement of a number of major tourism infrastructure projects that are set to be 'game changers' for the region's tourism future.

Europeans first identified the region in 1770, when Captain James Cook named the distinctive Glass House Mountains because their shape reminded him of the huge glass furnaces (glasshouses) back in his native Yorkshire. However, until the 1960s, the area was known simply as the 'Near North Coast' (of Brisbane). Then the enterprising real estate industry advocated strongly for a name change and persuaded the region's three councils at the time – Landsborough, Maroochy and Noosa – to adopt the Sunshine Coast name, which was proclaimed in August, 1967.

In 2016, the region attracted over three million domestic travellers and 266,000 international travellers, a record for the Sunshine Coast. The popularity has spurred a wave of new tourism development plans.

Sunshine Coast Airport is set to undergo the biggest transformation in its history. The expansion will include a new 2450-metre-long and 45-metre-wide runway, which will cater for large aircraft including the Airbus A330 and Boeing 777 and 787. The terminal also will be upgraded. The extension follows

the official recognition of Sunshine Coast Airport as an 'International Airport' in 2016. Construction will get underway this year and is scheduled for completion by 2020.

Two new 5-star hotel developments were announced in 2016. Starwood's Westin brand was announced as part of a proposed new integrated development at Yaroomba Beach; while a 5-star hotel was also mooted as part of a major redevelopment project in Mooloolaba.

A \$400 million themed water park was announced by SANAD Capital on Steve Irwin Drive. The park will feature a wave pool capable of producing waves of up to three metres in height, as well as an interactive aqua play structure capable of holding up to 2000 people at a time. Hotel and function facilities will be included. Subject to planning permissions, work on the park is scheduled to commence in 2017.

Also on Steve Irwin Drive, world-renowned Australia Zoo is planning to expand onto its adjoining Beerwah site, providing a dedicated 'live in' experience for zoo patrons. The nature based tourism project will consist of eight cabins, 32 recreational vehicle sites and 68 bush camp sites, a reception area and amenities. The proposal follows the opening in 2016 of Rivershore Resort, the first new holiday park developed in south east Queensland for over 40 years.

A new Discovery Centre is being developed as part of an upgrade of tourist facilities at Mary Cairncross Scenic

Reserve in the Hinterland. *The Reserve* comprises 55 hectares of National Estate listed subtropical rainforest overlooking the Glass House Mountains with a wide variety of walking tracks for visitors. The new Discovery Centre will include an elevated viewing platform and boardwalk, cafe, theatre, and a conservation research area. It is scheduled to open in mid-2017.

Visit Sunshine Coast and Sunshine Coast Council are planning a year of celebrations to attract new and previous visitors to the 'Sunny Coast'. These include the launch of a new Discovery Guide, which provides a guide for visitors to retrace the region's heritage from sites showing the axe grinding practices of the original Kabi Kabi inhabitants through the early European settlers as they opened up the land for farming, gold exploration and tourism, including the Sunshine Coast's first tourism 'icon' – the Big Pineapple.

Also being fully launched in 2017 is the Sunshine Coast's new web-based Food Trail, which allows visitors to discover the region's world-class 'paddock to plate' food experience, including new cooking schools, restaurants, breweries and providores.

Commenting on the 50th anniversary, CEO of Visit Sunshine Coast, Simon Latchford, said that the region's diversity of attractions was providing the momentum for tourism growth across the region.

Tourism Greater Geelong and the Bellarine welcoming Cruise ships

Tourism Greater Geelong and The Bellarine and the City Of Greater Geelong welcome all cruise ship passengers to their beautiful city and surrounding area.

Within a short walk from the welcome area are many boutique shops as well as the National Wool Museum which showcases the history of sheep farming and specialises in the sale of quality woollen clothing and gifts.



A stroll through the Botanic Gardens is a special treat for those keen to stretch their legs, as is a walking trail along the Waterfront and a photo opportunity with one of the many colourful bollards that line the shore depicting the history of Geelong.

The meet and greet service offered is run by a team of volunteers ready to welcome visitors no matter what hour the ships dock. They offer assistance with all inquiries and endeavour to make suggestions for a visitor experience that is one to remember.

Port Adelaide Passenger Terminal and surrounds

A new, permanent taxi waiting area in the car park provides sheltered seating for passengers and other guests waiting for taxis.

The recent addition of a security office in the car park area offers visitors and passengers a quicker and more efficient entry through security to the terminal area. As Flinders Ports continues improvements to the terminal, the new balustrading on the balcony allowed for two gangways on the upper deck into the terminal for the visit by *Ovation of the Seas*.



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Published By

AUSTRALIAN CRUISE ASSOCIATION

[ABN 44 021 935 869]

Editor: Jill Abel

Address: PO Box 1117 Sandy Bay,
Tasmania, Australia 7006

Phone/Fax: +61 3 62237334

Email:
ceo@australiancruiseassociation.com

Web:
www.australiancruiseassociation.com

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