



## Media Release

Thursday 4 September 2025

### And the winner is.....Brisbane!

The Australian Cruise Association (ACA) today announced that its **2026 Annual Conference and AGM** will be held in **Brisbane, Queensland**, reaffirming the city's growing stature as a world-class cruise gateway.

The announcement follows the most competitive bidding process to date, with numerous compelling submissions received from key cruise destinations around the country - a reflection of the value placed on hosting this signature industry event.

Brisbane's winning bid was submitted by the **Brisbane Economic Development Agency (BEDA)**, in partnership with **Tourism and Events Queensland** and **Port of Brisbane**. It underscored the city's exceptional cruise infrastructure, industry collaboration, business-events capability, and cruise market momentum.

The 2026 Conference will be held from 2–4 September at the Brisbane Marriott Hotel. Around 160 delegates are expected, including cruise line executives, port and destination representatives, tour operators, shipping agents, and other cruise and tourism stakeholders.

As part of the conference program, a dedicated Queensland famil will highlight the state's diverse cruise offering to international and domestic cruise line executives, with visits to key destinations including the Whitsundays and Gladstone.

In announcing the host city, **Jill Abel**, CEO of ACA, said:

"We are delighted to bring the ACA Conference back to Queensland in 2026. Brisbane offers state-of-the-art cruise infrastructure, a dynamic business-events environment, and seamless access to iconic regional destinations such as Townsville, Cairns and the Great Barrier Reef.

The opening of the Brisbane International Cruise Terminal in 2022 has positioned the city as a major player in the national cruise landscape, capable of accommodating the world's largest vessels.

Complementing this, BEDA's Cruise Tourism Trade-Ready Program has supported the development of innovative visitor experiences and helped local businesses become cruise-ready. Together, these initiatives make Brisbane an outstanding host city for our 2026 event."

**Lord Mayor Adrian Schrinner said:**

"Brisbane is proud to host the 28th Australian Cruise Association Annual Conference in September 2026.

"As Australia's lifestyle capital, our world-class tourism and experience economy is booming – and we want the cruise industry to get onboard.

"From vibrant riverfront precincts and iconic destinations to pristine coastlines and lush national parks, Brisbane offers something for everyone.

"This conference is a fantastic opportunity to showcase our region and help shape the future of cruising in Australia."

**Anthony Ryan, CEO of Brisbane Economic Development Agency, added:**

"Hosting the 2026 conference is a powerful endorsement of Brisbane's momentum and growing reputation as a leading cruise and events destination.

"With one of Australia's premier cruise terminals, strong support for local operators and a thriving visitor economy, we're primed to deliver a standout conference that aligns with the future of cruising in the region."

**Minister for the Environment and Tourism Andrew Powell** said securing the 2026 Australian Cruise Association Conference is a testament to Queensland's growing reputation as a world-class cruise destination.

"Through our 20-year tourism plan *Destination 2045*, we want to transform Queensland into Australia's events capital, growing our events calendar to \$4 billion by 2045," Minister Powell said.

"This business event will bring significant economic benefits to Brisbane, while showcasing our tourism offerings to key leaders in the cruise industry."

**Brisbane by the Numbers**

- Over **150 cruise calls** expected in the 2024/25 season from **13 cruise lines**
- Brisbane is Australia's **second-largest cruise port**, with **196 ship arrivals** in the 2023/24 season
- Each ship visit to the Brisbane International Cruise Terminal contributes over A\$1 million for the Queensland economy
- In 2023/24, cruise tourism nationally contributed **A\$8.43 billion** in economic output and supported **26,370 full-time equivalent jobs**

Commented [JA1]: Should be able to update this figure in coming days

- In 2023/24, Queensland's cruise sector alone generated **A\$2.4 billion** in economic output and supported **7,733 jobs**
- In 2023/24, Queensland recorded around **520 ship visit days** and **778,000 passenger visit days**, contributing nearly **A\$1 billion** in direct cruise-related expenditure
- In 2023/24, Brisbane's total visitor spend reached **A\$12.1 billion**, supporting nearly **80,000 jobs** and attracting **9.4 million visitors**
- BEDA's Cruise Tourism Trade-Ready Program has supported **15 local operators** in developing cruise-ready experiences

**About Australian Cruise Association:**

ACA is the cooperative marketing body for cruise tourism in the Australia-Pacific region, representing ports, tourism agencies, inbound operators, and cruise facilitators committed to promoting the region as a leading cruise destination.

**Images of Brisbane:**

<https://www.dropbox.com/sc/lfo/17aox0lynyu1s2t8rhil2/h?rlkey=60zfnf5wzv2hb8z53teae2f12&st=46va4oha&dl=0>

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