



**AUSTRALIAN  
CRUISE  
ASSOCIATION**

# NEWS

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## Message from the Chairman

**As we come to the end of our 2025/26 season, we continue to celebrate the strong cruise community in our region and the commitment to guiding our destinations into a new phase of growth, following a time of recalibration.**

While global demand for cruise remains strong, the operating environment has become increasingly complex. Geopolitical uncertainty, shifting deployment patterns and evolving regulatory settings are influencing the positioning of fleets and how destinations like Australia continue to compete globally.

In this context, the Australian Cruise Association has taken an important step forward with the launch of our Strategic Action Plan in early 2026. The Plan brings together a clear and coordinated framework across policy, infrastructure, destination development and sustainability - with

a focus on supporting the long-term confidence needed for cruise deployment in our region.

A key priority is progressing towards a more nationally aligned approach to cruise tourism, ensuring greater consistency across jurisdictions and a more streamlined operating environment. This is about working in partnership with industry to strengthen Australia's competitiveness and support future deployment decisions.

Our focus remains on enhancing the overall cruise experience - from port infrastructure and operational efficiency through to the continued development of high-quality, diverse shore experiences that showcase the best of Australia and the South Pacific.

At Seatrade Cruise Global 2026, ACA will once again represent "Team Australia" alongside our regional partners from New Zealand, Fiji and Papua New Guinea. It remains an important opportunity to engage

directly with cruise line partners, share insights, and continue building strong, collaborative relationships.

This season sees us sadly farewell Disney Cruise Line following its Australian deployment. While it is always disappointing to see capacity leave the region, we remain confident in the long-term opportunity for Australia and look forward to the opportunity of welcoming Disney back to our waters in the future.

We also invite you to join us at our signature "Down Under BBQ" at the ACA/NZCA stand on Wednesday 15 April, from 4:00pm - 6:00pm. It's always a great opportunity to connect with colleagues and partners.

Although I won't be attending in person this year, I have every confidence in our team and members, who continue to work closely with industry to support a strong future for cruise in our region.

**Brendan Connell, Chairman**



# Charting the future of cruise in Australia

## Australian Cruise Association launches national strategic action plan to drive policy reform, infrastructure investment and sustainable cruise growth.

The Strategic Action Plan sets out a clear, coordinated approach to strengthen cruise tourism's contribution to Australia's economy, regional communities and visitor economy.

Representing a diverse national membership of ports, tourism bodies and service providers, the plan reinforces ACA as a unified national voice for cruise tourism and sets out a structured engagement program with Federal and State governments to drive policy reform, infrastructure investment and a coordinated National Cruise Tourism Strategy.

CEO Jill Abel said the plan responds to long-standing fragmentation across policy, planning and regulatory settings that directly affect Australia's cruise competitiveness. "Cruise tourism delivers billions in economic benefit, supports tens of thousands of jobs and plays a critical role in regional dispersal - yet policy settings remain inconsistent across jurisdictions," Mrs Abel said.

Chair Brendan Connell said the Strategic Action Plan reflects the collective voice of ACA's national membership and strives for a framework for long-term industry confidence.

"Our ports, destinations and industry partners are committed to sustainable cruise growth, but they require policy certainty and coordinated planning to invest with confidence. This plan

represents a unified position and a constructive pathway forward to ensure cruise continues to deliver economic and social benefits across Australia," Mr Connell said.

### A coordinated national approach

The Strategic Action Plan focuses on five priority areas:

- Policy and regulatory reform, including coastal trading certainty, border processing efficiency and regulatory harmonisation
- Port and terminal infrastructure, addressing capacity constraints at major gateways and enabling growth at regional ports
- Destination development, supporting sustainable cruise growth aligned with state and regional tourism strategies
- Sustainability and social licence, including shore power, emissions reduction and innovation in clean fuels
- Regional economic development, ensuring cruise continues to deliver tangible benefits to communities across Australia

The plan includes a structured engagement program with key Federal portfolios covering tourism, transport, trade, infrastructure, environment and border operations, alongside state-based engagement in all states and territories.

### Supporting a National Cruise Tourism Strategy

A central pillar of the plan is ACA's call for the development of a National Cruise Tourism Strategy, aligned with

state and territory planning frameworks and supported by consistent regulatory and investment settings.

"Australia needs a coordinated national approach to cruise - one that recognises the sector's economic contribution, supports infrastructure planning and provides certainty for cruise lines making long-term deployment decisions," Mrs Abel said. "Our Strategic Action Plan provides a practical roadmap to get there."

### Stronger collaboration with industry and regions

The plan also strengthens engagement with ACA's national membership, regional ports and destination partners through regular briefings, consultation forums and data-driven advocacy.

"This is about collaboration - not just advocacy," Mrs Abel said. "ACA will continue to work closely with governments, ports, communities and industry to ensure cruise growth is sustainable, well-planned and delivers shared value."

The Strategic Action Plan will guide ACA's government engagement and advocacy activity over the next 12 months, with outcomes reported to members and stakeholders through regular updates and an annual State of the Industry report.

Find out more at [australiancruiseassociation.com](http://australiancruiseassociation.com)

[australiancruiseassociation.com](http://australiancruiseassociation.com)



## Shore Power on track for 2026 delivery

Australia's first shore powered cruise terminal, in Sydney's White Bay, is on track to be plug-in-ready by the end of 2026.

The \$60 million project, delivered by Port Authority of NSW, will allow shore-power-enabled cruise ships to switch off diesel engines while at berth and plug directly into the landside electricity supply sourced from 100% matched, green renewable electricity generated by wind and solar.

Port Authority of NSW CEO John McKenna said shore power would

significantly reduce carbon dioxide emissions.

"By switching engines off and using a landside electricity supply, we'll be reducing emissions by up to 4,000 tonnes per year - that's the equivalent of planting 20,000 trees," Mr McKenna said.

While shore power has now been mandated in the Northern

Hemisphere for all ports to install by 2030, this landmark project in NSW will be the first of its kind in the Southern Hemisphere and sets a new benchmark for innovation on Sydney Harbour.

"I am immensely proud that Port Authority is leading the way to a more sustainable cruise industry in Australia," he said. "We all know the benefits that cruise contributes to our visitor economy, bringing millions of tourists to our shores. But the impact goes beyond our terminals, and it's our responsibility to ensure that we're supporting the industry in a sustainable way, which is why projects like shore power at White Bay are so important."

"By leading the delivery of this Australian-first infrastructure, we're helping reduce emissions at berth and setting a new standard for more sustainable cruise operations."

Find out more at [portauthoritynsw.com.au](http://portauthoritynsw.com.au)



# New support for cruise tourism in NSW

Destination NSW has updated its cruise tourism resources to help visitor economy businesses learn more about the cruise sector and how they can get involved. They include:

- Cruise Sydney and NSW - an overview of the cruise industry
- Cruise 101 - seasonality, passenger demographics and cruise terminology
- Value of cruise tourism - a guide to the economic value of cruise and the benefits to a destination
- Quick tips for creating cruise shore experiences - a guide for visitor economy businesses seeking to make the most of cruise visitation.



As part of the NSW First program, Destination NSW also hosted a webinar with cruise industry experts - Creating unforgettable cruise shore experiences - to support visitor economy business to create, enhance

and deliver authentic cruise shore experiences and how to attract visitors before and after their cruise.

View the webinar on demand at [destinationnsw.com.au](https://destinationnsw.com.au)

# NSW Visitor Economy Strategy 2035



The NSW Government has released its bold new roadmap to turbocharge the state's visitor economy. The NSW Visitor Economy Strategy 2035 has a clear target to generate \$91 billion in annual visitor expenditure, 40,000 hotel rooms, 8.5 million new airline seats and an additional 150,000 jobs by 2035.

The strategy focuses on five key pillars to accelerate growth:

- Make it easy for more people to visit – growing aviation capacity by 8.5 million seats, unlocking 40,000+ new accommodation rooms and expanding the tourism workforce.
- Focus on attracting visitors – elevating the NSW and Sydney brands through bold storytelling and data-led marketing, showcasing Sydney as a destination beyond well-known postcards.

- Drive growth through events – locking in a nation-leading calendar of major sport, culture and business events to draw visitors year-round.
- Focus on experiences – delivering immersive, high-quality and culturally rich visitor offerings across metro and regional NSW that highlight our stunning landscapes and world-leading produce.
- Leverage data and insights – improving access to real-time data and consumer insights to enable agile decision-making across the sector.

Cruise has been identified as a key driver for growth under the experience pillar. The cruise sector is an important element of NSW's visitor economy, supporting jobs, regional dispersal and local businesses.

Expanding cruise tourism beyond Sydney to regional ports creates new economic opportunities while enhancing passenger experiences. These efforts will broaden economic benefits, support local businesses and ensure more passengers experience NSW's diverse landscapes, heritage and culture.

Find out more at [nsw.gov.au](https://nsw.gov.au)



## *The world's best fish market has officially opened in Sydney*

**The NSW Government recently completed the new Sydney Fish Market, which officially opened for business on 19 January 2026.**

Rising from the water on Sydney Harbour, the new Fish Market joins the Sydney Opera House and Sydney Harbour Bridge as the third major landmark on Sydney Harbour, set to attract more than six million local and international visitors each year.

This globally recognised architectural marvel combines world-leading engineering with state-of-the-art technology - bringing together a fully

operational wholesale fish market where retail, dining, education and public space come together under one spectacular fish scale-inspired roof.

Seafood lovers, fishers and the broader community can now enjoy double the retail space of the old fish market, with the spectacular new building offering 40 food and retail operators, from casual takeaway to premium waterfront restaurants.

The new Sydney Fish Market also includes modern facilities for wholesalers including ice-making systems capable of producing more than 50,000 kilograms of ice daily, live crustacean tanks, and a brand-new

auction room, visible to the public.

In addition to the building, the precinct features 6,000 square metres of public domain including a water play art feature, creative installations and a waterfront promenade where locals and visitors can connect, relax or stroll through.

Additional light rail services will support the new Sydney Fish Market with even more public transport options to follow, including a new ferry wharf, upgrades to Wentworth Park light rail and the upcoming metro at Pyrmont.

Find out more at [sydneyfishmarket.com.au](https://sydneyfishmarket.com.au)



# New tour at the Art Gallery of New South Wales

The Art Gallery of New South Wales has launched a new tour experience: Australian Art Stories.

The daily, guided morning tour is an intimate, 75-minute journey that offers guests exclusive early access to the gallery before it opens to the public, allowing for a more immersive exploration of Australian art, history, and culture.

The tour spans both buildings of the Art Gallery including a visit to the Yiribana Gallery to encounter the depth and dynamism of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art practice, and a morning tea break with an expert educator at MOD Dining, one of the Art Gallery's signature restaurants.

Available as a private buy-out, the tour also runs as a 60-minute group experience for up to 150 people.

More than an art tour, it's a cultural journey through Sydney's history, Indigenous heritage, and celebrated coffee culture.

Find out more at [artgallery.nsw.gov.au](http://artgallery.nsw.gov.au)



## Australia's first Takashi Murakami exhibition

The Art Gallery of New South Wales will present a blockbuster retrospective exhibition of superstar Japanese artist, featuring the global premiere of new work and celebrating three decades of creative output by one of the most influential and recognisable contemporary artists of our time.

Developed by the Art Gallery in collaboration with Takashi Murakami, visitors will be immersed in a Murakami takeover of the Art Gallery's Naala Badu building with a major retrospective and the global premiere of new work in the atmospheric Nelson Packer Tank. The exhibition will trace Murakami's practice from the explosive

innovations of the 1990s to a suite of new works yet to be revealed. Bringing together paintings, sculptures, video and large-scale installations, the exhibition charts the artist's emergence as a defining figure of contemporary art and pop culture.

Exclusive to Sydney, the exhibition is presented at the Art Gallery as part of

the 2026/27 Sydney International Art Series, a NSW Government initiative through Destination NSW.

The Takashi Murakami exhibition will be exclusively presented at the Art Gallery of New South Wales from 5 December 2025 to 18 July 2027.

Find out more at [artgallery.nsw.gov.au](http://artgallery.nsw.gov.au)



Takashi Murakami Cherry Blossoms Fujiyama JAPAN 2020 © 2020 Takashi Murakami/Kaikai Kiki Co., Ltd. All Rights Reserved



## *Newcastle strengthens cruise offering ahead of record 2026/27 season*

**Newcastle is gearing up for its biggest cruise season yet, underpinned by a strengthened regional partnership and enhanced resources to support cruise line growth.**

In 2025, a new Cruise Newcastle Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Port Authority of NSW, Destination Sydney Surrounds North, the Newcastle Tourism Industry Group, and seven local government areas across the Hunter and Central Coast was announced.

A key outcome from the agreement is joint funding of a part-time Cruise Coordinator, who will work with the cruise industry to expand itineraries, enabling guests to experience the very

best of the vibrant Hunter and Central Coast regions.

To further elevate the visitor experience, Cruise Newcastle has secured passionate local guides to support the delivery of shore excursion tours, sharing their destination knowledge and love of local stories with visiting cruise passengers.

The momentum is already translating into results. The 2026/27 season is

set to break records, with 17 cruise ship visits, including six maiden calls, reflecting growing industry confidence and the region's expanding appeal.

With a coordinated approach, enhanced shore excursion experiences and a record season ahead, Newcastle is positioning itself as a guest-ready port for cruise lines seeking fresh Australian itinerary opportunities.

Find out more at [visitnsw.com](https://www.visitnsw.com)





## *Celebrating Eden's double decade of cruise*

**The Port of Eden reached a proud milestone last year, marking 20 years since the first modern cruise ship sailed into Twofold Bay.**

Since then, Eden has welcomed more than 200 ships and over 400,000 guests and crew, playing a significant role in strengthening the local economy and supporting businesses across the Sapphire Coast region.

Port Authority of NSW has been a proud partner in Eden's cruise journey, delivering critical infrastructure to help grow the industry.

"Eden's growth has been shaped by the local community, who have embraced cruise tourism over the past two decades," said Port Authority of NSW CEO John McKenna.

"We've seen a collective backing of cruise in Eden, which has helped Port Authority deliver key infrastructure like Eden Cruise Wharf, the award-winning Eden Welcome Centre, as well as planning modifications to ensure the region is ready to welcome larger ships and longer stays. This has all helped Eden put its best foot forward for cruise tourism," he said.

This shared commitment is felt most clearly when ships arrive in port.

"Local volunteers are at the heart of Eden's cruise story. They're the first friendly faces many passengers see and play a vital role in helping visitors feel instantly welcome.

"Volunteers are ready to help passengers explore the very best the Sapphire Coast has to offer, from local coffee hotspots to the best experiences and attractions in the region."

As a gesture of thanks and recognition of the important role they play, Port

Authority recently provided new custom volunteer jackets to acknowledge their contribution and ensure they are comfortable and warm while welcoming cruise guests ashore.

"Looking ahead, we are committed to supporting Eden's cruise industry, working with key local partners like Bega Valley Shire Council and Cruise Eden to strengthen the community that makes Eden such a special place," Mr McKenna said.

Find out more at [portauthoritiesnsw.com.au](http://portauthoritiesnsw.com.au)





## Eden's Killer Whale Museum revitalisation

**Eden's growing number of cruise visits has brought investment, confidence and transformation to one of the town's most popular attractions, the Eden Killer Whale Museum.**

The many cruise visitors have encouraged this regional volunteer-based museum to refine its operations, strengthen curatorial management and elevate engagement opportunities. Expectations have grown and the Museum has risen to meet them, delivering a seamless shore experience.

One of the most significant impacts cruise growth has had on the Museum has been the confidence to invest in ambitious exhibition redevelopment. The Museum's top floor has recently been transformed into *Hunters of the Sea - The Story of a Unique Bond*, a bold new immersive exhibition exploring Eden's globally unique partnership between humans and killer whales.

This revitalisation has not been incremental, but expansive. The display now spans two major gallery spaces and reinterprets the story from multiple perspectives - Thaua cultural traditions, shore-based whaling history, and the legacy of Eden's legendary orcas through to modern day conservation and whale watching. Dramatic sculptural installations, digital storytelling elements and

interactive displays now create a layered and engaging contemporary visitor experience.

Among the most striking additions are the life-sized dorsal fins based on four of Eden's famous killer whales - Old Tom, Humpy, Typee and Charlie - rising evocatively from the gallery floor. Designed to deliver scale and emotional impact, these sculptural elements illustrate the sheer presence of the orcas to guests.

Cruise guests have reinforced a simple truth: visitors want immersive, memorable experiences. They want to feel something. The redevelopment of *Hunters of the Sea* reflects that understanding.

No object at the Eden Killer Whale Museum carries greater emotional weight than Old Tom, the most famous killer whale in Australian, and perhaps even global, maritime history. Growth in cruise visitation has supported the painstaking relocation and reinterpretation of his skeleton, strengthening conservation outcomes while also creating a more dramatic and dignified encounter between visitor and legend.

Today, Old Tom is presented to contemporary museum standard, and for many cruise guests, standing beneath his towering frame has become the defining moment of their time in Eden - the point when a remarkable story becomes unforgettable.

Eden offers something few other cruise destinations can: a maritime story that is globally unique. The partnership between killer whales and humans in Twofold Bay remains one of the most extraordinary recorded interspecies relationships in history. It is authentic, compelling and deeply rooted in place.

Cruise guests step ashore expecting scenic beauty - and they find it. But they also discover a story they have never experienced before. That is one of Eden's strengths and the Eden Killer Whale Museum is proud to share it.

Find out more at [killerwhalemuseum.com](http://killerwhalemuseum.com)



## South Australia's commitment to cruise

Driving growth through southern collaboration, infrastructure investment and multi-port itineraries.

Cruise tourism in South Australia delivered an estimated \$198 million in total economic impact during 2024/25, supporting approximately 613 full-time equivalent jobs across the state. The destination continues to be recognised by industry partners for its regional appeal, operational reliability and strong stakeholder collaboration. Looking ahead, the 2025/26 cruise season is expected to welcome approximately 56 vessel visits, reflecting a more consolidated deployment year while South Australia continues to focus on long-term growth, itinerary quality and future capacity.

The South Australian Tourism Commission (SATC), in collaboration with Flinders Ports and the Renewal SA team, is progressing an Outer Harbor Cruise Terminal Master Plan. This strategic initiative is focused on increasing capacity, improving passenger access, and positioning the terminal to support future cruise growth. The planning also considers integration with surrounding precinct developments, with a clear focus on enabling future homeporting opportunities and visitor enhancement.

In partnership with Flinders Ports, South Australia has introduced

targeted incentive programs for cruise lines committing to multiple port calls beyond Adelaide. These include regional destinations such as Port Lincoln – the Seafood Capital of Australia, and Wallaroo – Gateway to the Clare Valley Riesling Trail. Additional incentives may be available for cruise lines considering homeporting or partial turnaround operations in Adelaide, further enhancing itinerary flexibility.

Complementing port-led incentives, the SATC will deliver a series of familiarisation programs for destination managers, product development teams and deployment planners. These experiences will showcase new and emerging shore excursion products, supporting itinerary innovation and destination confidence.

Adelaide continues to offer strong accessibility and capacity fundamentals, with 12 international airlines servicing Adelaide Airport, alongside more than 4,000 new hotel rooms delivered over the past decade. As Australia's central rail hub, Adelaide also underpins the growing popularity of Rail and Sail packages, enabling passengers to seamlessly combine cruising with iconic journeys such as The Ghan and the Indian Pacific.

Beyond state borders, South Australia is working closely with Victoria and Tasmania to collectively promote Southern Ocean cruising. Together, the states have developed curated 4–7-day itineraries that highlight the distinct strengths of each destination, offering cruise lines compelling options for future deployment and itinerary diversification.

During the most recent season, passengers visiting South Australia enjoyed access to new and exclusive experiences, including behind-the-scenes tours at Adelaide Central Market, twilight roof climbs at Adelaide Oval, degustation experiences at McLaren Vale's d'Arenberg Cube, and sand dune adventures within Port Lincoln's unique natural landscapes.

Looking ahead, the SATC is progressing the development of its 2030 Cruise Ship Action Plan. The plan will place increased emphasis on homeporting attraction, regional dispersal and long-term sustainable growth, ensuring South Australia remains a compelling and competitive cruise destination within the Australian and global market.

Find out more at [southaustralia.com](https://southaustralia.com)



## *New port option on Victoria's Bellarine Peninsula*

**Portarlington is emerging as a new tender port option for cruise operators seeking added variety and flexibility in Southeast Australian itineraries.**

Located on the Bellarine Peninsula, Portarlington is close to Geelong. It provides direct access to a region known for coastal landscapes, abundant food, wine and seafood, and relaxed seaside villages.

Shore experiences are easy to tailor. Guests can enjoy small friendly villages and waterfront time, explore boutique wineries, distilleries and breweries, or connect with the region through hands-on local produce experiences, including Portarlington's mussel farming story with tastings close to where it's grown.

For those drawn to iconic scenery, the

destination also works as a launch point for full-day touring along dramatic coastline of the Great Ocean Road and rainforests of the Great Otway National Park, with the Twelve Apostles within reach.

The wider Geelong-Bellarine destination adds further depth for programming, from UNESCO City of Design experiences to wildlife and Indigenous culture, supporting a mix of short stays, independent exploration and organised tours.

From an operational perspective, deep-water anchorage close to shore enables efficient tendering to

Portarlington Pier, with clear passenger movement and coach access. The port can be programmed as a standalone call or paired with Geelong to spread passenger flows across a single destination.

As cruise lines look to refresh itineraries and manage capacity, Portarlington offers a practical new Victorian option in a region that feels familiar to passengers yet delivers a different onshore experience.

Find out more at [visitgeelongbellarine.com.au](http://visitgeelongbellarine.com.au)

## *New Twelve Apostles Visitor Experience Centre*

**The \$126M (AUD) facility on the Great Ocean Road opens in November 2026.**

Overlooking the Twelve Apostles rock stacks in the Southern Ocean and featuring dining, retail and exhibition spaces, the Centre marks a new era for Twelve Apostles Marine National Park.

For the first time the traditional owners, the Eastern Maar people, will deliver experiences from the Centre and provide interpretation of this ancient area. The Twelve Apostles is a two-hour coach journey from Portland and Geelong, while air travel is recommended from Melbourne.

Find out more [visitgreatoceanroad.org.au](http://visitgreatoceanroad.org.au)



# New tours at Melbourne's Queen Victoria Market

The Queen Victoria Market is a favourite destination for cruise ship passengers and there are now two fabulous tours that Shorex programs should include as part of their Melbourne stay.

The Ultimate Foodie Tour is a delicious two-hour guided walking tour, where guests will taste the freshest produce, discover unique ingredients, and explore the Market's fascinating history. Along the way, learn about the market's sustainability initiatives and meet some of the Market's beloved traders who bring it all to life.

Wander through the heritage-listed food halls, stopping at some of the Market's best stalls to indulge in an abundance of flavours - from fresh fruit and gourmet goodies to sweet treats and classic Market favourites. Every guest also receives a handy cotton tote bag to carry the Market treasures and take a piece of the experience home. Fun, informative, and full of delicious seasonal tastings, this tour is the ultimate way to experience the sights, smells, and tastes of Queen Victoria Market.

The Seasonal Bites and Market Sights walking tour is a shorter tour. Over the course of an hour, cruise guests will explore the Market's rich history, meet passionate traders, and uncover the stories that make this iconic Melbourne landmark come alive.

Enjoy the flavours of the season and taste the freshest local produce and indulge in a classic Market treat - the legendary hot jam doughnut from the American Doughnut Kitchen. Along the way, the QVM's friendly guides will share fascinating insights, fun facts, and plenty of laughs as guests wander through the vibrant stalls and laneways.

Walk away with a deeper appreciation of the Market's ever-changing seasonal offerings, its community of traders, and the colourful spirit that



makes Queen Victoria Market a true Melbourne treasure.

To ensure a safe and pleasant tour, the QVM allocates approximately 10 guests per tour guide. The maximum number of guests they can accommodate is 40 guests per session. They are happy to run more than one session per day for large groups, depending on availability.

Find out more at [qvm.com.au](http://qvm.com.au)





## Exclusive experiences for cruise guests on Phillip Island

### Get up close with the Little Penguins

The Phillip Island Nature Park has a special offering for cruise line guests visiting Phillip Island. The Underground viewing area provides up-close views of the Little Penguins as they waddle from the beach to their burrows.

Accommodating up to 60 guests, the experience includes a Ranger welcome and host for the evening, accompanied by a glass of sparkling upon arrival and 2 x cold canapes. Guests will leave with a plush penguin gift as a reminder of their visit to the Penguin Parade.

Find out more at [penguins.org.au](https://penguins.org.au)



### Feed the Highland Cattle on historic Churchill Island

Visitors can now get up close and personal with one of the world's most iconic and photogenic farm animals, thanks to a new Highland cattle experience at Churchill Island.

Phillip Island Nature Parks will launch a new experience for visitors to learn more about the shaggy, long-horned, gentle giants at the Churchill Island Heritage Farm from November 2026.

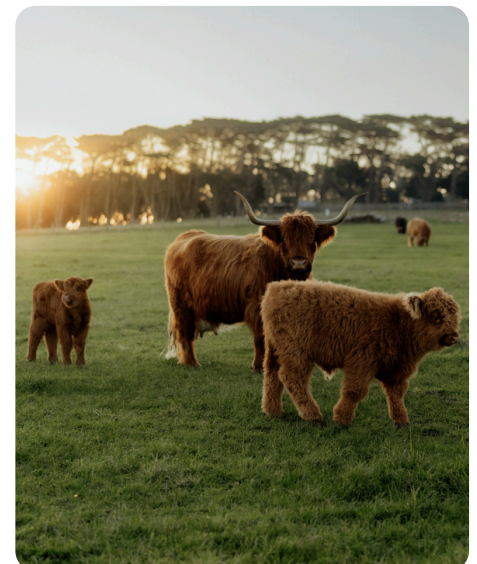
Originally from the Scottish Highlands, Highland cattle are among the oldest registered breeds in the world, known for their hardiness, docile nature and ability to adapt to harsh weather conditions.

As part of the new experience, visitors to Churchill Island can ride on board a tractor to meet and feed Highland cattle in an experience that blends nature and history.

Visitors will learn about the Bunurong

history and European history, experience several centuries-old Moonah trees and farm animals before heading to the hero Highland cattle experience, where they can throw hay for them to eat and take photos at close range. Heritage-listed Churchill Island was an important place of early European settlement in Victoria where the first European garden was established in 1801 with a crop of wheat and corn.

Find out more at [penguins.org.au](https://penguins.org.au)



# Experience the 2028 Total Solar Eclipse in the Kimberley

Western Australia's Kimberley region will offer one of the world's most spectacular vantage points for the total solar eclipse on 22 July 2028, the second of five total solar eclipses visible in Australia between 2023 and 2038.

The eclipse's path of totality is first seen in the Kimberley, placing key locations such as Wyndham, Kununurra/Goornoorang, El Questro, Home Valley Station and Bigge Island directly beneath its centreline.



The full eclipse lasts about three hours, but in the Kimberley, totality - when the sun is completely obscured - will reach around five minutes and 10 seconds, one of the longest durations in a single location along its path.

With the region renowned for its vast wilderness, dramatic rock formations and exceptionally clear skies, the

Kimberley offers an unforgettable natural amphitheatre for this rare celestial event. Visitors can pair their eclipse viewing with a Kimberley cruise or stay at one of several iconic outback stations for a once-in-a-lifetime experience.

Find out more at [australiasnorthwest.com](http://australiasnorthwest.com)

# New premium winery experiences in the Margaret River Region

Western Australia's famed Margaret River Region, accessible via the popular anchorage destination of Busselton and one of only 26 biodiversity hotspots in the world, has welcomed several new high-end cellar door and culinary experiences.

Subsea Estate introduces a world-first combination of abalone tasting paired with wines matured under the surface of the Southern Ocean, offering visitors a rare insight into maritime ageing processes alongside a behind-the-scenes tour at the marina.

Nearby, Edwards Wines and Miss Chow's, located just off Caves Road,



now provide a seamlessly co-located cellar door, art gallery and restaurant precinct. Together, they offer a refined blend of wine, food, and culture framed by the region's signature coastal and forest landscapes.

These new offerings further elevate the Margaret River Region's reputation as one of Australia's premier gourmet destinations.

Find out more at [subseaestate.com](http://subseaestate.com)

# Additional berthing for the Port of Geraldton

The Port of Geraldton/Jambinu is undergoing a major upgrade to Berth 1 that will deliver a dedicated berth for cruise ships.

A well-established harbour on Western Australia's Mid West coast, the Port of Geraldton is an overnight cruise north of Fremantle/Walyalup and is a two-day trip south of Exmouth.

Geraldton provides seamless access to Kalbarri/Wurdimarlu's dramatic gorges and Skywalk, the striking pink lakes of Hutt Lagoon, and the pristine Houtman Abrolhos Islands.

Berth 1 will be open for bookings from September 2027.

This upgrade significantly elevates Geraldton's ability to welcome larger ships while maintaining efficient, safe and flexible berthing conditions.



Max LOA will be initially 294m and will increase to 323m after 12 months of operation, with a 43m beam and a draft up to 12.5m.

One of the restrictions on Berth 3 currently is regarding portside infrastructure that doesn't allow

extended bridgewings at times.

The new Berth 1 will have no permanent infrastructure so there will be no restrictions in regard to extended bridgewings.

Find out more at [midwestports.com.au](http://midwestports.com.au)

# Woola Walyalup: A warm Aboriginal welcome to Fremantle

Cruise guests arriving into Fremantle/Walyalup (or 'Freo' as the locals call it) are greeted with an authentic and culturally rich welcome as part of the city's 'Woola Walyalup' special welcome experience at Walyalup Koort.

Guests can enjoy complimentary shuttle transfers from the terminal to the city centre, where a dedicated team and local volunteers provide personalised guidance at the state-of-the-art visitor centre.

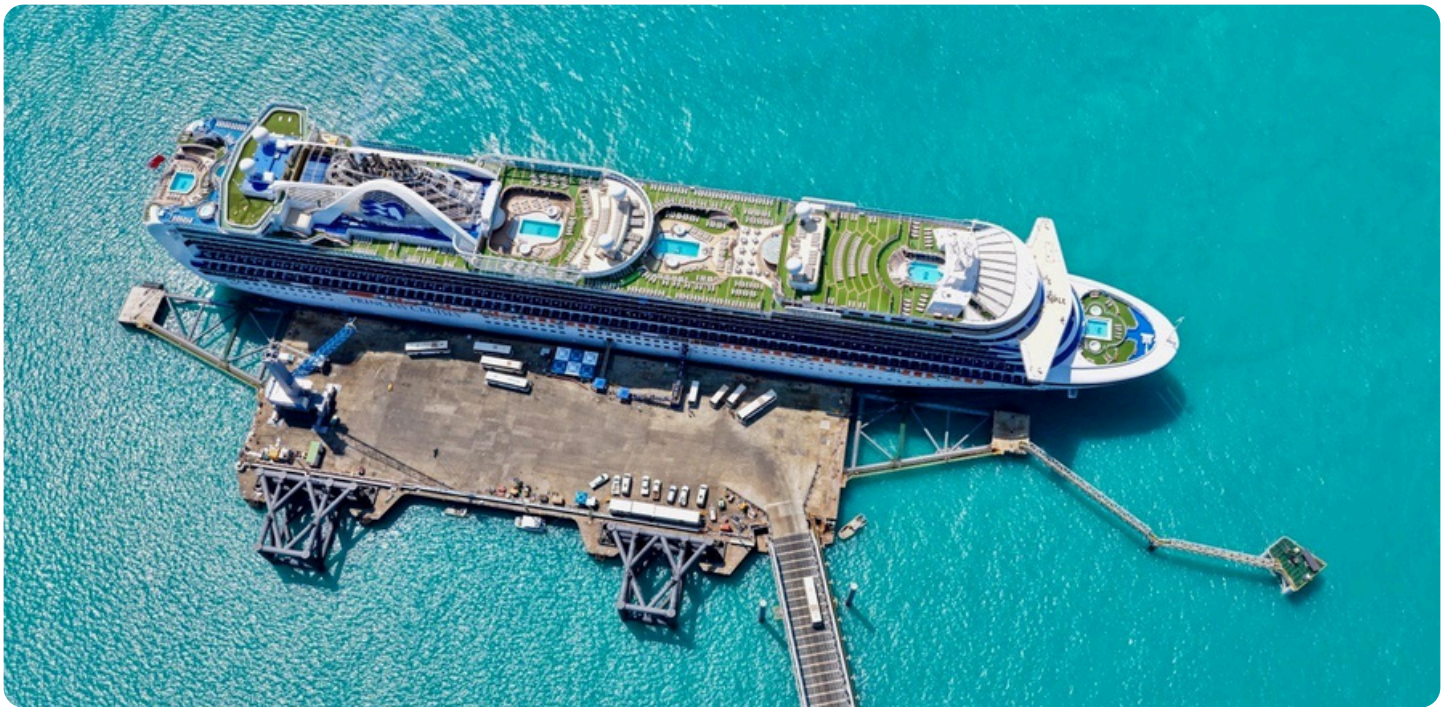
The Woola Walyalup experience features live Aboriginal music, traditional smoking ceremonies, and dance performances, creating meaningful cultural exchange and connecting guests with the deep



Noongar heritage of this coastal gateway.

With its warm hospitality and inclusive atmosphere, Fremantle continues to set a benchmark for culturally led cruise welcomes in Australia.

Find out more at [visitfremantle.com.au](http://visitfremantle.com.au)



## New marine infrastructure for the Kimberley

The exotic pearling port of Broome/Rubibi is the gateway to the Kimberley region, one of the last true wilderness areas on Earth.

Broome has just become even more accessible for cruise visitors, thanks to the opening of the \$220 million Kimberley Marine Support Base (KMSB) in September 2025.

This impressive addition to the Port of Broome welcomed its first major cruise ship, Crown Princess, on 9 October 2025, marking a new era for cruising in Western Australia. The KMSB will welcome the return of Crown Princess on 4 April 2026 for the facility's first overnight call.

Broome will turn-on a memorable welcome with day and evening markets, cultural entertainment and the opportunity for the view of the stairway to the moon phenomenon.

Set against Broome's famous red cliffs and turquoise waters, KMSB's new floating deck features breasting and mooring dolphin arrangements to accommodate cruise ships up to 348 metres LOA for extended visits to Broome and offers the potential for overnight stays.

Guests will have more time to explore Broome's vibrant culture, pristine beaches, and gateway access to the breathtaking Kimberley coast.

This impressive facility incorporates a 165m x 50m floating wharf platform linked to a 485m link span and causeway, allowing safe and efficient operations regardless of tide depth.

Find out more at [kmsb.com.au](http://kmsb.com.au)

## New Chapter for West Coast Pilots

West Coast Pilots has acquired Captain Craig Brent-White's shareholding in Kimberley Coastal Pilots (KCP).

Established in 2017 as a joint venture between Craig and West Coast Pilots to provide a much-needed service to the cruise industry in the Kimberley, management of KCP will now transition to West Coast Pilots as Craig prepares to retire.

Over the coming months Craig will mentor a new cohort of pilots, passing on his 36 years of experience as a

Master Mariner and pilot in the Kimberley region. Craig initiated the cruise industry in the Kimberley in 1990 with the ship World Discoverer owned by Linblad and operated by Society Expeditions.

West Coast Pilots has a 23-year legacy of marine pilotage in regional Western Australia and provides licenced pilotage services in all significant regulated ports in the Kimberley.

Find out more at [westcoastpilots.com.au](http://westcoastpilots.com.au)





## *Developing shoreside capability in Tasmania*

**Enhancing Tasmania's capability for cruise remains a key industry focus, with strong collaboration continuing to build shoreside capability and ensure the state remains a leading destination for cruise visitors.**

Two sector development initiatives were delivered in late 2025 in partnerships between TasPorts, the Tourism Industry Council Tasmania (TICT) and The Tourism Academy (THTA). These initiatives were designed to strengthen the capability and confidence of those working on the frontline of Tasmania's cruise offering.

The one-day Cruise Guide Course, delivered by THTA, provided practical training for volunteer and professional guides working with shore excursion operators in Hobart and Burnie. Participants developed skills in customer service, storytelling, cultural and environmental interpretation, and managing real-world visitor scenarios, with a strong focus on the unique

needs and expectations of cruise passengers.

In parallel, TICT launched the "Tassie Cruise Spotlight" online training module ahead of the peak cruise season. This initiative provides tourism operators with a behind-the-scenes understanding of the logistics, systems and coordination required to deliver successful cruise visits, while building awareness of passenger behaviours and expectations to help align their tour offerings.

Together, these initiatives are enhancing the quality and consistency of Tasmania's shoreside experience, supporting the state's reputation as a world-class cruise destination.

Find out more at [tasports.com.au](https://tasports.com.au)



# Major pontoon extension for Port Arthur

## Port Arthur Historic Site will strengthen their cruise capability for the 2027/28 season with a major pontoon extension.

In recognition of cruise visitation being a vital economic driver for Port Arthur and the broader region, the Port Arthur Historic Site Management Authority (PAHSMA) has announced a significant upgrade to the Mason Cove cruise pontoon, a project designed to future-proof cruise operations, enhance visitor experience and safety, and support continued growth in Tasmania's visitor economy.

Scheduled for completion ahead of the 2027/28 cruise season, the extension will double the number of tender berths, improve passenger flow, and address longstanding operational limitations that have challenged cruise operators in recent years.

The upgraded pontoon will expand from two to four berths, representing a 100% increase in operational capacity.

This expansion will:

- Ensure two tender berths dedicated to cruise are available at all times.
- Allow quicker and more efficient passenger transfers.
- Prevent vessel queuing during peak tendering periods.
- Reduce operational congestion caused by shared commercial and cruise departures.

To address grounding concerns, the inner berth water depth will increase from 2.0m to 3.0m. This deeper, safer berth aligns with the increasing draft requirements of modern tender vessels.

The project will also reconfigure the pontoon alignment with a 15-degree angle modification, simplifying tender approach paths and improving manoeuvrability in varying marine conditions.

To meet cruise industry security expectations and improve separation between cruise and non-cruise users, the extension includes:

- A central handrail separating passenger flows
- A dedicated gantry access point, ensuring controlled movement and compliance with secure zone requirements

The improved capacity will enable concurrent operations and reduce the need to pause cruise transfers during commercial departures.

The pontoon extension forms part of PAHSMA's commitment to maintaining the Port Arthur Historic Site as a premium cruise destination. Construction will occur outside the cruise season to prevent disruption to existing operations. The extended facility will be fully operational before the 2027/28 season begins.

Find out more at [portarthur.org.au](http://portarthur.org.au)





## *Darwin's new cruise transport service provider*

**Cruise Transit was founded by Shayne Murray, who also leads Broome Transit and brings more than 16 years' experience delivering cruise ship transfers, airport shuttles and charter services in the region.**

Shayne's extensive local knowledge and long-standing involvement in cruise logistics underpin the high-quality service now offered in Darwin.

Cruise Transit operates one of the most versatile fleets in the region, catering to a wide range of guest needs. From luxury vehicles for executive travel through to 12-seat vans, 24-seat buses and 53-seat coaches, Cruise Transit is equipped to move guests safely, efficiently and in comfort.

At the core of the operation is a commitment to exceptional customer service. Whether working with first-time visitors, cruise partners or corporate clients, the team provides consistent professionalism and attention to detail.

As a gateway to some of Australia's most spectacular natural attractions, Darwin offers a unique visitor experience. Cruise Transit delivers a range of shore excursions showcasing the region, including the iconic Litchfield area, with its waterfalls, wildlife and rich cultural heritage. Experienced local guides

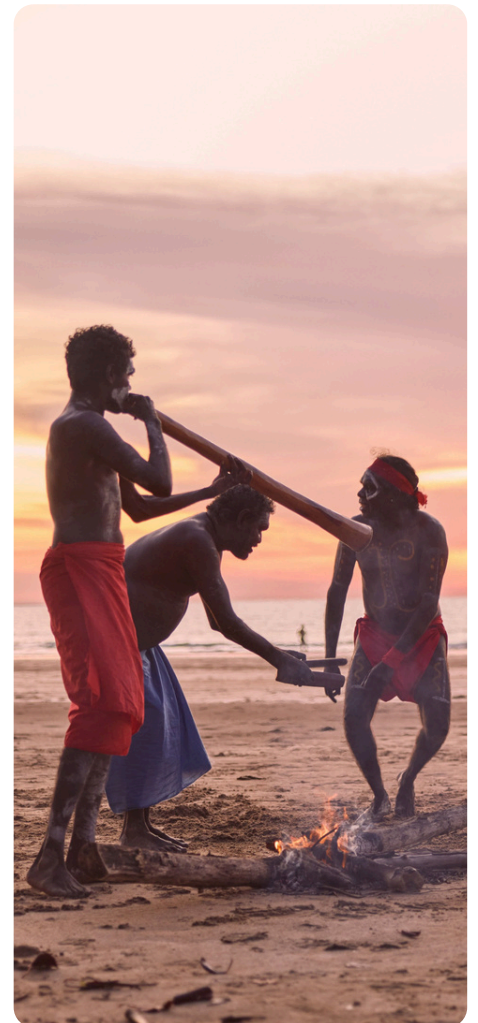
ensure guests enjoy an engaging and memorable Top End experience, whether on a short stopover or full-day tour.

Cruise Transit also provides efficient cruise ship shuttle services, offering seamless hotel transfers to help passengers maximise their time ashore.

As the operator of the Darwin Airport Shuttle, Cruise Transit provides daily, flight-tracked services aligned with real-time arrivals and departures. With 24/7 operations, guests can rely on timely transfers for both early morning departures and late-night arrivals.

In addition to tourism services, Cruise Transit supports the region's oil and gas sector with reliable transport solutions for workforce movements and site transfers. The company is also experienced in servicing private and corporate events, including conferences, weddings and VIP travel, delivering a seamless experience from booking through to drop-off.

Find out more at [cruisetransit.com.au](http://cruisetransit.com.au)





## *Expert pilotage for safe and scenic navigation*

**The Great Barrier Reef remains one of the world's most extraordinary cruising destinations - a living natural wonder that demands precision, experience and respect.**

As cruise visitation to the region continues to strengthen, Auriga Pilots remains committed to delivering safe, efficient and environmentally responsible pilotage through these complex waters.

Navigating the Reef is unlike anywhere else in the world. Its intricate coral formations, shifting sandbanks and dynamic tidal streams require local expertise and real-time situational awareness.

Auriga's highly experienced cruise pilots work collaboratively with Captains and bridge teams, reviewing passage plans and offering refinements that optimise safety, efficiency and scenic value. Small adjustments to routing can enhance fuel efficiency, improve arrival

windows and maximise daylight scenic cruising opportunities - all while maintaining strict compliance with regulatory requirements.

Beyond the Reef, Auriga pilots continue to support cruise operations in Papua New Guinea, the Kimberley region, the Northern Territory coastline, and Shark Bay.

Each of these regions presents similar navigational complexities, including large tidal ranges, remote operating environments and environmentally sensitive areas.

Auriga operates in full accordance with the stringent standards set by the Australian Maritime Safety Authority and the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority. Our pilots are trained to manage challenging tidal windows, restricted visibility, traffic density and contingency planning in remote locations.

In 2025, Auriga maintained its strong record of safe and on-time pilotage services, reinforcing the confidence that cruise operators place in our team.

Auriga's pilots bring local insight and regional knowledge to the bridge, and where appropriate, contribute to onboard guest engagement through informative commentary and presentations. This connection enhances passenger appreciation of the Reef's ecological significance while reinforcing the industry's shared responsibility to protect it. Cruising through the Reef is more than a transit - it is a highlight of the voyage.

As cruise schedules expand and vessels increase in size and capability, Auriga continues to invest in training, operational resilience and pilot availability to ensure seamless service delivery - even in remote environments.

Auriga values their long-standing partnerships with cruise operators and remains dedicated to delivering professional, reliable and sustainable pilotage services throughout the Great Barrier Reef and beyond.

Find out more at [auriga.com.au](https://www.auriga.com.au)



## Shore excursion opportunities expand on Great Keppel Island (Woppa)

**Great Keppel Island (Woppa), located just 30 minutes from the mainland on Queensland's Capricorn Coast, is strengthening its position as a highly accessible and experience-rich shore excursion destination within the Southern Great Barrier Reef.**

Central to this evolution are the Woppaburra Rangers, Traditional Custodians of the island, who are leading cultural land and sea management and delivering authentic visitor engagement. Their recent completion of Indigenous-led Savannah Guide training has further enhanced local capability to provide culturally informed, guided experiences, offering cruise guests meaningful opportunities to connect with the island's heritage, landscapes and living culture.

Supporting self-guided exploration, 51 new wayfinding and interpretive signs

have been installed across key walking trails, including Lighthouse, Monkey Point and Mount Wyndham. These clearly marked trails provide cruise passengers with achievable shore hiking opportunities featuring panoramic lookouts and access to secluded beaches within typical port timeframes.

The island's fringing reef system and calm waters also enable a diverse range of marine experiences. Keppel Dive and Water Sports and Freedom Fast Cats deliver snorkelling and glass bottom boat tours, while Funtastic Cruises and the Keppel Explorer provide immersive adventure tours, connecting visitors with the island's hidden coves, reef systems and natural beauty. Independent exploration is further supported through GKI Boat Hire and guided adventure operators including Yeppoon Jet Ski Tours.

For day visitors, Great Keppel Island Hideaway offers convenient casual dining and bar facilities, providing a welcoming place to relax and enjoy the island atmosphere.

Importantly, regular scheduled ferry services operated by Keppel Konnections and Freedom Fast Cats provide reliable, scalable access between the mainland and island, supporting efficient passenger movement.

Together, these cultural experiences, marine activities, infrastructure upgrades and established transport services position Great Keppel Island as a cruise-ready destination with strong capacity for shore excursion growth.

Find out more at [visitcapricorn.com.au](https://www.visitcapricorn.com.au)





# Australian Cruise Association Conference to call into Brisbane in 2026

**Tourism & Events Queensland, Brisbane Economic Development Agency (BEDA) and Port of Brisbane will host the annual Australian Cruise Association Conference and AGM in Brisbane from 2-4 September 2026.**

One of Australia's fastest growing capital cities, Brisbane is alive with opportunity. Known for its open-air lifestyle, friendly locals and vibrant riverfront precincts, the city offers a compelling blend of business capability and leisure appeal - making it an ideal setting for the cruise industry to come together.

Delegates will experience a city with a proven track record of delivering world-class business events, supported by exceptional venues, seamless connectivity and a collaborative, city-wide approach. With Brisbane Airport located just 20 minutes from the CBD and offering extensive domestic and international connections, ease of access is assured.

In 2019, Brisbane invested in a state-of-the-art cruise terminal, positioning the city as a prominent cruise destination. Since the return of cruise operations in 2022, the sector has experienced strong growth, with 196 ship visits during the 2023/24 season, delivering close to one million passengers and contributing \$1.56

billion to the regional economy.

Today, Brisbane stands as Australia's second-largest cruise destination and a key gateway to the South Pacific and Great Barrier Reef.

Beyond the conference, Brisbane invites delegates to explore its diverse offering - from the cultural heart of South Bank Parklands and the Queensland Art Gallery & Gallery of Modern Art, to the bustling dining and entertainment scenes of the inner city. The city also serves as a gateway to iconic destinations including the Gold Coast, Sunshine Coast and Moreton Island, each offering experiences that strongly align with cruise itineraries.

Over the past decade, Brisbane has evolved into a vibrant leisure destination, shedding its former perception as purely a corporate hub. Hosting the ACA Conference will further strengthen this positioning, providing influential industry decision-makers with the opportunity to experience the destination firsthand while contributing to the continued

growth of its cruise sector.

Looking ahead, Brisbane's selection as host of the Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games highlights the city's global trajectory and capacity to deliver on the world stage. With the Games on the horizon, the 2026 conference provides a timely opportunity for industry leaders to better understand the role cruise can play in supporting and leveraging this once-in-a-generation event. Brisbane remains committed to growing its visitor economy in the lead-up to 2032, with the cruise industry set to play a central role in that expansion.

As the cruise sector continues to build momentum in Australia, the Brisbane conference will bring together key stakeholders to strengthen partnerships, share insights and explore opportunities for sustainable growth - set against the backdrop of a city shaping its future on the global stage.

Find out more at [australiancruiseassociation.com.au](https://australiancruiseassociation.com.au)



*Published by*

**AUSTRALIAN CRUISE ASSOCIATION**

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