Darwin to host jam-packed month of cruise ships

20 February 2016

Darwin’s bumper cruise season is about to go into overdrive with a flurry of cruise ships set to sail into the Top End capital.

Chief Minister and Tourism Minister Adam Giles said today’s arrival of the *Amsterdam* and *Pacific Princess* were the first of 13 ships that will dock in Darwin over the next four weeks, bringing a capacity of nearly 20,000 passengers.

“The cruise industry is extremely important to the Top End as it provides an influx of tourists into the region during the off-peak and shoulder seasons,” he said.

“The next four weeks will be the busiest on Darwin’s cruise calendar, which is great news for local tourism operators and businesses.

“Cruise ship passengers and crew undertake tours while on shore, visit local attractions and shop at local retail outlets, cafes and restaurants.

“The next four weeks will see a real buzz around the city and I encourage all local businesses to embrace these cruise ship visits and provide a warm welcome to the thousands of visitors.”

A record 46 cruise ship visits are expected in Darwin in 2015-16 with 30 of these visits coming over the ‘cruise season’ which runs from October until the end of April.

The next four weeks will see a number of ‘Double Days’ where two ships will dock in Darwin on the same day providing a double dose of visitors.

These are:

- Saturday 20 February: The *Amsterdam* (1380 passenger capacity) and the *Pacific Princess* (826 passenger capacity);
- Thursday 25 February: *Crystal Serenity* (1070 passenger capacity) and *Azamara Quest* (680 passenger capacity); and
- Sunday 20 March: *Celebrity Millennium* (2138 passenger capacity) and *Radiance of the Sea* (2496 passenger capacity).
Mr Giles said Sunday 20 March was set to be the busiest day of the cruise season with a combined passenger capacity of over 4500 passengers on two ships.

“The Northern Territory Government strongly encourages retailers and Darwin city cafes and restaurants to open on this day to make the most of the significant influx of passengers,” he said.

The Darwin Waterfront and City Retailers’ Association, in conjunction with Darwin City Council and the NT Government, will provide entertainment on each of the ‘Double Day’ cruise ship visits to ensure visitors receive a warm welcome.

“We’ll have our colourful balloons set up to guide the cruise passengers from the Waterfront to the city and music playing in the Mall to give the town a great atmosphere,” said Association President Darren Lynch.

Mr Giles said the Northern Territory’s cruise industry provided an important boost for tourism in the Top End, injecting an estimated $54 million into the local economy last financial year.

“The 46 cruise ship visits this financial year will carry a passenger capacity of more than 70,000 – the largest Darwin has ever had,” he said.

“A strong performing cruise industry is part of the Country Liberals Government’s plan to drive the development of North Australia and build a $2.2 billion visitor economy by 2020.”

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