Peter Styles  
Minister for Business

**Darwin gearing for unexpected overnight cruise ship windfall**

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Darwin’s value as Australia’s Northern Gateway port is being reinforced this week with the Celebrity Solstice making an unscheduled overnight stopover Deputy Chief Minister and Business Minister Peter Styles said today.

“Celebrity Solstice is one of the largest ships ever to visit Darwin and was due to arrive in Darwin via Bali for a day visit on 10 March,” Mr Styles said.

“It is now by-passing Bali and travelling direct to Darwin arriving tomorrow for the extended overnight stay delivering a commercial windfall for our retail and tourism and hospitality sectors.

“The cruise liner arrives Tuesday, 8 March around 11am, and staying overnight, departing at 5:30pm on Wednesday, 9 March.

“This is good news for Darwin because it means 2667 passengers and some of the 1263 crew will be able spend more time exploring the city and going on pre-arranged tours.

“The ground handlers looking after this ship are developing a range of experiences to promote to passengers for their evening in Darwin, including a sunset harbour cruise, and dining options at the Waterfront and in the CBD.

“Darwin Port, Tourism Top End, City of Darwin and retailers are working to ensure Darwin is ready for the early arrival of Celebrity Solstice. They have also been put on notice about the possibility of more overnight stopovers from visiting cruise ships in coming weeks.”

Celebrity Solstice was launched in August 2008 by Celebrity Cruises, part of the Royal Caribbean Cruises family. Some of her unique features include an ocean-going live grass lawn, a glassblowing studio and a 12-deck high atrium.

It is 314.86m in length and is certain to attract a bit of attention from locals wanting to see the spectacular ship while in harbor.

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

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