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# Cruises planning relaunch

## Liners due to return to Port of Cairns by December

PRINCESS, Regent Seven Seas and Oceania cruise ships plan to return to Cairns waters by December. Sapphire Princess is due to be the first Princess Cruises ship to arrive, scheduled to visit the city on December 7.

It will be followed by a further three calls in March 2022 by Coral Princess and Pacific Princess.

Oceania liners, which visit the Port of Cairns while cruising between Asia and Australia, will return from December 9 with the arrival of Regatta, according to AsiaPacific Oceania Cruises and Regent Seven Seas Cruises managing director Steve Odell said.

Regent liner Seven Seas Explorer will call into Cairns on December 14, 2021.

"We also have a further five scheduled vessels visiting Cairns in 2022, and three scheduled for 2023," Mr Odell said.

Regent had been experiencing strong demand for "close to home" voyages across Australia, New Zealand and Asia, he said.

"Looking beyond 2021, we have already seen the incredible pent-up demand for future travel across both brands with Regent experiencing record booking launches for its 2023 World Cruise and its 2022-2023 Voyage Collection."

There has also been a huge surge in bookings for Queensland itineraries on Carnival, the world's biggest cruise line, which has reported a 400 per cent increase in demand in Queensland voyages since announcing a delay on international trips.

It is estimated Cairns will receive \$6.8m in visitor spending and Port Douglas \$3.7m from the new cruise ship visits this year.

P&O Cruises Australia is scheduled to resume sailing from Cairns on October 30, with Pacific Explorer carrying out five dedicated sailings until December 4.

Cairns-based Coral Expeditions, which relaunched in October, has also reported increased demand.

Commercial director Jeff Gillies said following its successful Cairns relaunch, the business was now also operating in Tasmania, South Australia, the NT and returning to WA in March.

"Expedition cruising, which is distinctly different to the large cruise liner industry is expected to be in strong demand in the years ahead. We have seen excellent growth in interest and bookings emerging from the COVID environment," Mr Gillies said.

He insisted interest augered well for destinations such as Cairns and Cape York and it was an excellent sustainable tourism model for the industry.

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