

Ports North welcomes P&O arrivals

The latest P&O cruise ship *Pacific Aria* heralds an exciting new development in cruise shipping in the Far North with her arrival at the Cairns Cruise Liner terminal on Thursday, December 3, for her maiden call to Cairns.

“Ports North is very excited to be welcoming this P&O ship to our harbour for two days,” Port North Chairman Russell Beer said. “Not only will *Aria* be visiting the port three times during December and remain a regular in the coming year, but twin ship *Pacific Eden* will also make a maiden call later this month and then home port in Cairns next year.

“This is the first time a major cruise line has based itself in a regional Queensland city, and we are honoured to have *Pacific Eden* in the Port of Cairns during the peak cruise months.”

“Ports North’s investment in providing world-class facilities for cruise shipping in Cairns is directly benefiting local tourism and all of the services that support the industry,” he said.

Tourism Tropical North Queensland Chief Executive Officer Alex de Waal said the arrival of the *Pacific Aria* to Cairns was the start of a strong relationship with P&O's new cruise ships *Pacific Aria* and *Pacific Eden*.

"With three visits to Cairns in December before her sister ship the *Pacific Eden* arrives on December 22, *Pacific Aria* will bring a welcome economic boost to Tropical North Queensland in the lead up to what is expected to be a busy Christmas and New Year," he said.

"Even more exciting is that the 1500-passenger *Pacific Eden* as the first cruise ship to homeport in Cairns will bring a \$4 million boost to the region in September 2016.

"Tourism Tropical North Queensland has been working with Ports North and Tourism and Events Queensland to raise the profile of Cairns as the link between east coast Australian cruising and the exotic ports of Southeast Asia and Papua New Guinea."

Pacific Eden will be based in Cairns from September to November 2016 taking cruises to PNG and the Pacific.

"*Eden* and *Aria* will be regular sights in our city during 2016 with approximately 17 visits between them; growing to 30 visits in 2017," Mr Beer added.

Cairns will also be welcoming, for the first time, the ships *Super Star Virgo* in December, *Azamara Quest* in January and *Le Soleal* in February.

“That’s five maiden calls in just three months. It shows how our region is a very real player in the Australian Cruise Industry,” Mr Beer said.

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