

Media alert

21 October 2016

Locals, laughs and a long weekend

Pacific Eden will be welcomed again at the Cairns Cruise Liner Terminal on Saturday at 0700hrs for another turnaround, where some 1400 passengers will disembark to make way for a “Comedy Wave Cruise” which leaves at 4pm on the same day.

The three-night cruise features live comedy shows, comedy workshops and talent shows.

Ports North Chairman Russell Beer said the CCLT will certainly have a different atmosphere on Saturday, and indeed, on the ship’s return the following Tuesday.

“I suspect there’s going to be quite a festive air with so many locals heading out to sea,” he said. “P&O put their faith in Ports North as a homeport destination, and in return, we are seeing some exceptional holiday opportunities for the local region.”

Local travel agent Mercedes Gonzales said the response in Cairns to this one-off has been huge. She had expected to book about 50 people and ended up with a group of 251.

“That’s close to 20 per cent of the bookings for the cruise,” she said. “A lot of businesses in Cairns have taken it up, and I’ve had some people from the Tablelands booking in. It’s going to be quite a party.”

Ms Gonzales said the cruise popularity was due to the fact it was over a weekend and that many Far Northerners were trying out the cruise experience for the first time.

P&O Cruises President Sture Myrmell confirmed this cruise was a big hit for the FNQ region.

“The people of Cairns have really welcomed *Pacific Eden* during her first season of cruises from the city so we’re very excited that so many will be on-board for this weekend’s comedy cruise,” he said.

“While our longer cruises from Cairns have attracted an estimated 40 per cent of guests from interstate, this short break is designed for locals.

“It’s the perfect chance to sample all the great features *Pacific Eden* has to offer while also test-driving a cruise holiday and having a lot of laughs. About three-quarters of the guests on-board this Saturday’s cruise are Cairns residents so while it’s officially themed as a comedy cruise, unofficially we’re dubbing it the ‘Cairns cruise’.

Mr Myrmell said *Pacific Eden* was now half way through her first season of homeporting in Cairns and was scheduled to return for an even bigger encore season from August to November 2017, featuring 10 cruises including P&O’s first international short break from Cairns to Papua New Guinea and another three-night “Cairns cruise”.

“This is pretty exciting for the Cairns region,” he added. “A mini-break that takes you to international destinations – it’s another first.”

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