



Diamond Princess Kicks Off Record New Zealand Cruise Season

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Auckland's biggest ever cruise season is now underway, with Princess Cruises' megaliner Diamond Princess heading up a flotilla of ships sailing local waters over the coming months.

The 116,000-tonne, 2670-guest Diamond Princess arrived in the harbour city this morning – the first of more than 30 different ships which will visit Auckland between now and April 2016.

The most frequent cruise line visitor to New Zealand, Princess Cruises has six ships scheduled to make more than 200 calls to local ports over the coming months – accounting for about one-third of all cruise ship visits. The majority of the ships' passengers will be Australian, with Princess Cruises carrying more Australians across the Tasman than all other cruise lines combined.

The visiting Princess ships include newcomer Golden Princess which will make her maiden visit to New Zealand this Saturday (October 10) when she berths in Auckland.

Princess Cruises Vice President Australia & New Zealand Stuart Allison said Princess' ships visits would deliver close to \$100 million to the New Zealand economy in passenger and crew spending, supplies and ports charges over the coming months.

Mr Allison said New Zealand continued to be a very popular destination for Australian cruisers, with almost 90,000 Australians cruising across the Tasman in 2014.

"New Zealand offers a diverse range of ports, each featuring remarkable scenic beauty and memorable experiences yet all positioned in relative proximity to each other, which is why it's such a great cruise destination," Mr Allison said.

New Zealand ports now account for seven of Princess' top 10 ports in the Australasian and Pacific region, and five of the cruise line's top 30 ports around the world, with one-third of the cruise line's global 18-ship fleet visiting the country this summer.

Mr Allison said Princess' ships would call at 10 different New Zealand ports during the season, from Bay of Islands in the north to Dunedin in the south. A new addition for Princess this season is Gisborne, which will receive 10 calls from Princess ships.

Auckland is one of Princess' most frequent ports of call, with 27 Princess visits scheduled for the city this summer.

Mr Allison said that in addition to being a great cruise destination, New Zealand was also developing as a nation of cruisers, with close to 70,000 Kiwis taking a holiday at sea last year.

"More and more New Zealanders are recognising cruising as an easy and great value way to travel so we're now responding to local demand and offering new opportunities for New Zealanders to cruise direct from their doorstep on Princess' ships, sailing to destinations from Australia to Tahiti, South America and beyond," he said.

For more information on Princess Cruises visit www.princess.com or www.wlcl.co.nz