

After Two Years of Pandemic Struggle Suppliers are Hiring Again with Cruising Restart on the Horizon

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Clean Cruising's Dan Russell and team of travel agents

As P&O Cruises Australia's Pacific Explorer makes her way home, loyal cruise suppliers are for the first time in two years hiring people as the restart of cruising promises a brighter future for their businesses and jobs.

Some suppliers have already hired new team members while others are gearing up for increased activity as guests return to holidaying at sea in ever-increasing numbers with the phased resumption of cruising in Australia.

Marguerite Fitzgerald, President of Carnival Australia and P&O Cruises Australia, said the suppliers' job-filling plans confirmed the importance of the cruising ecosystem in supporting many businesses and jobs in Australia.

"We have seen and felt the pain of our suppliers as they have negotiated two difficult years with the suspension of cruising," Ms Fitzgerald said.

"Their determination to emerge on the other side was an inspiration to us all and, even at the hardest of times, they were planning for the future.

"With the restart of cruising on the horizon, their instinctive reaction is to grow and to hire people to help make their ambitious plans a reality."

Dan Russell, general manager of family-owned specialist travel agency, Clean Cruising, said cruise bookings increased dramatically after the restart was announced.

"I can confirm we have been steadily busy every day since the cruise resumption was announced and we are actively seeking up to five cruise consultants and a consultant support

role to keep up with the current demand," Mr Russell said.

"It is the best thing to be creating jobs again. For the first time in two years, we can forecast income that we know won't be cancelled, which lets us finally do some proper business planning."

Jay McKenzie, CEO and owner of the Bob Wood Cruise Group, which represents hundreds of tour operators around the country, said business optimism had now returned.

"It's an amazing feeling but also a little nerve-wracking trying to work out if I should staff up now, still with no income, or wait until we start getting our cash flow growing but we have managed to navigate through covid and now it's time to shake it off and see what the future brings," Ms McKenzie said.

Owner of adventure company, Riverlife Brisbane, John Sharpe, is about to start hiring 16 staff to run the P&OEdge adventure activities on board P&O Cruises Australia's ships and marine engineering specialist Graeme Blackman of Inter Marine Pty Ltd is seeing promising signs. Steven Biviano of Select Fresh Providores is planning to rehire staff to help replenish ships with big quantities of fresh produce.

"It is excellent to hear these success stories and to know that the restart of cruising is making such a positive contribution in turning around the fortunes of some wonderful Australian businesses," Ms Fitzgerald said.

Media information, please contact:

E: media@carnivalaustralia.com