

P&O Cruises Australia's Pacific Explorer Returns to Sydney

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Welcome Home!

P&O Cruises Australia's Pacific Explorer Returns to Sydney and a Stunning Welcome After Two-Year Absence



Pacific Explorer in Sydney Harbour

P&O Cruises Australia's flagship, Pacific Explorer, received a spectacular welcome home to Sydney this morning with a ceremonial 'water cannon salute' celebrating her arrival – marking the start of the rebuild of the \$5 billion a year Australian cruise industry.

Pacific Explorer became the first cruise ship to return to Australia in more than two years, passing through Sydney Heads at about 9.30am before gliding into Circular Quay mid-morning with an escort of official vessels and Sydney 'boaties'.

Her arrival marked a 28-day voyage from Europe where the ship has been paused for much of the past two years waiting to come home to Australia.

Pacific Explorer was welcomed by chartered boats carrying cruise suppliers, loyal guests, travel agents and cruise line staff, who cheered and shed tears of joy as the ship came into view.

Leading the water cannon salute was the Port Authority of NSW's fire tug, Shirley Smith — named after a Wiradjuri woman, social worker and humanitarian — in consort with Engage Towage's water cannon tugs Martinique and Fitzroy. Two other Engage 'working' tugs, Cook and Diamantina accompanied Pacific Explorer to the Overseas Passenger Terminal.

"It was always going to be an emotional homecoming for Pacific Explorer and her crew and this morning was a fitting celebration for her return to Sydney," P&O Cruises Australia President Marguerite Fitzgerald said.

"Pacific Explorer coming through Sydney Heads after two long years was a magic moment and I am proud to say there was hardly a dry eye among our suppliers, guests and staff.

"Pacific Explorer's arrival has replaced uncertainty with optimism and marks the rebound of cruising, on the way to re-establishing Australia as the world's most successful cruise market, previously contributing more than \$5 billion annually to the national, state and regional economies, and supporting 18,000 jobs."

Ms Fitzgerald said the first cruise carrying fare-paying guests would be on 31 May, a four-night round trip from Sydney to Brisbane.

It would operate with comprehensive health and safety protocols developed in collaboration with eastern seaboard governments.

NSW Transport Minister David Elliott said: "The day has finally arrived for Sydney Harbour to once again reclaim its rightful place as the epicentre of local and international cruising in Australia. Our maritime workforce has been working hard to put new protocols in place and is ready to welcome local cruisers and visitors with open arms."

The time between Pacific Explorer's arrival today and first commercial cruise will be a busy period of preparing to again welcome guests on board. This will include welcoming additional crew, the testing of guest services and equipment, training of galley and restaurant staff including baristas to ensure Aussie cruisers can enjoy a great coffee.