

Cruise New Zealand on a mission

Cruising in the Asia Pacific region is in an exciting space at the moment. Larger ships, new entrants and new builds to the region were recently announced. The completed expansion of the Panama Canal will present further opportunity.

As the industry body for New Zealand's cruise sector, Cruise New Zealand is tasked with ensuring New Zealand is well placed to maximise the potential of these changes. It recently invited CLIA (Cruise Lines International Association) Australasia to New Zealand to engage with key stakeholders with the objective of demystifying the cruise sector and establishing a blueprint for New Zealand's cruise future.

Auckland was a key topic. As New Zealand's primary exchange port, Auckland is critical to the success of cruise in New Zealand. With much larger and more frequent ship visits on the horizon, upgrading and "right sizing" Auckland's cruise infrastructure is imperative. With the ships increasingly carrying in excess of 3,000 passengers, efficient and seamless processes are necessary.

With port infrastructure and shore-side processes streamlined, Auckland can then be in a better position to explore its potential as a cruise hub. This was a vision shared by all present, and was also identified as one of the cruise objectives in the Tourism 2025 strategy.

CLIA Australasia Chairman Gavin Smith, who headed the delegation from Sydney, envisages New Zealand's growth through positioning Auckland for more fly-cruise opportunities. "New Zealand has largely been a successful cruise destination. However if we can make it easier for guests to cruise from Auckland, and can create new experiences, Auckland will become a better cruise hub."

To progress discussions, it was recognised that further insights are required. Cruise New Zealand is prioritising research as one of its key focuses and have begun discussions with CLIA and a number of other agencies to better understand the significance of cruise, particularly cruise visitor spend.

Cruise New Zealand is delighted with the outcome of the meetings. "This was a great opportunity for the cruise lines through CLIA Australasia to connect with our stakeholders on what is required to grow New Zealand as a successful cruise destination. It was heartening to hear that everyone had the same objective, to not only see New Zealand succeed further as a cruise destination, but with new exciting ideas on the table to do things more intelligently," said Graeme Marshall, Chair of Cruise New Zealand.

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Key facts:

- In the last 2012/2013 cruise season, New Zealand received 211,430 passengers and 82,370 crew.
- The 2012/2013 cruise season contributed \$310 million into New Zealand's economy and created 5,330 jobs.

- Research has shown that 40% of passengers intend to revisit a destination they had sampled on a cruise.
- Exchange passengers are worth 40% more than transit passengers; where exchange means a passenger that has started or ended his/her cruise in New Zealand.