

Cruise New Zealand celebrates Ovation deployment

16 April 2015

For the last year, Cruise New Zealand had been saying “it’s not if, but when”, and now the big ships are coming.

Royal Caribbean International has announced that its brand new *Ovation of the Seas* is headed for New Zealand after its initial debut in China. Scheduled to be delivered in April 2016, this third Quantum-class ship is expected to reach our shores in late 2016.

Ovation of the Seas will be the newest and largest ship to visit New Zealand at a length of 348 metres, 167,800 gross tonnage and a maximum capacity of 4900 passengers and 1300 crew. Each visit will be the equivalent of 12 Airbus A380s arriving at the same time.

“Due to the size of this ship, it can only visit select New Zealand ports (where minimal upgrades are still required to accommodate her). As Sydney is important to Australian cruising, so Auckland must be included in any New Zealand cruise itinerary. Neither Princes nor Queens wharves are big enough to accommodate the *Ovation of the Seas*, and it will need to use an industrial wharf as an interim solution,” Cruise New Zealand General Manager Raewyn Tan says.

Cruise New Zealand has been actively lobbying for big-ship capable infrastructure since *Quantum of the Seas* (the first of that class) was announced for China in 2014. Cruising tends to occur during the sunny months, and the belief is that Australasia is a natural offset for Asian winters.

“This belief is about to become reality. It is now imperative for New Zealand stakeholders to gear up on how to deliver a positive big ship experience,” Ms Tan says.

Tourism Industry Association Chief Executive Chris Roberts says the growth of the cruise sector is great for New Zealand’s tourism sector and wider economy.

“The tourism industry’s [Tourism 2025](#) growth framework identifies cruise as a valuable opportunity for growth over the next decade, both in terms of direct visitor spend and a means of bringing the tourism dollar to ports around the country,” he says.

The size of New Zealand’s cruise sector has grown by five times over the last ten years. If cruise were a country, it would be New Zealand’s second largest inbound holiday market, bringing 202,700 passengers. Crew account for an additional 69,000 visitors.

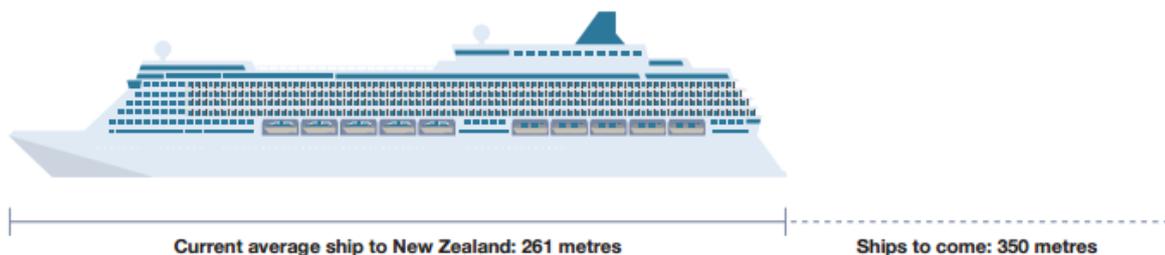
“There’s no sign of this growth slowing. So if we want to maximise the returns to Auckland and New Zealand, the development of the Ports of Auckland must include improved facilities for the largest cruise ships,” Mr Roberts says.

Tourism New Zealand is also welcoming the announcement that the *Ovation of the Seas* is soon to be cruising New Zealand waters.

“The rapidly expanding cruise sector is an important contributor to the New Zealand economy and wider tourism industry as we work towards the goals of the Tourism 2025 framework, which outlines key initiatives for supporting the growth of the tourism industry and how to target for value. Not only are cruise ships of this scale an increasing source of visitor value, research shows that 25% of passengers return to New Zealand for another visit within the year of their cruise,” Tourism New Zealand Chief Executive Kevin Bowler says.

In recognition of this, Tourism New Zealand is continually developing initiatives that encourage cruise visitors to come back for a more in-depth holiday, as well as promoting pre- and post-cruise activity in our key target markets internationally.

“The deployment of *Ovation* to Australia and New Zealand is true validation of the work we have been doing alongside Cruise New Zealand to ensure New Zealand continues to attract a growing share of the global cruise market,” Mr Bowler says.



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Key facts:

- Cruise is the fastest growing segment of tourism.
- New Zealand's cruise industry has grown by five times over the last ten years.
- If cruise were a country, it would be New Zealand's 2nd largest inbound holiday market at 202,700 passengers (2013-14). Crew is an additional 69,000 visitors.
- Electronic card data has shown that 25% of cruise passengers return to New Zealand for another visit within the year of their cruise. Previous figures have shown an even larger repeat visitation rate (@ 46% in 2010).
- In the 2013-2014 cruise season, the cruise sector accounted for 1,084,000 passenger port days and contributed \$365 million to New Zealand's GDP and supported 6800 jobs.
- Forecasts have shown no sign of this growth abating. The 2015-2016 season is expected to increase by over 20% to bring in 246,800 passengers and 83,200 crew. This is forecasted to contribute \$422 million to New Zealand's GDP and support 7900 jobs.
- Australians (52%) make up the majority of international cruise arrivals, followed by Americans (17%) and British (8%).