

Media Release

27 September 2022

Boost for local economy as region makes a comeback as world-class cruise destination

The Gladstone Region is set to be back on the map as a cruise destination before the year ends.

On Monday 14 November, Holland America Line's *MS Noordam* is expected to dock in our Port City with passengers on board set to be the first cruise passengers to be welcomed through Gladstone Ports Corporation's (GPC) modern cruise terminal since it was built in 2020.

Gladstone Region Mayor Matt Burnett said Gladstone has welcomed 35 cruise ships since March 2016 and our region is looking forward to giving our visitors the warm welcome we're so well known for.

"We can't wait to show our visitors the best our region has to offer; from the beautiful East Shores parklands where passengers disembark, to all the amazing tourism experiences on offer," Councillor Burnett said.

"In addition to our region's existing experiences, we recently announced some fantastic new tourism offerings unearthed during the Turtle Tank funding initiative, funded by Gladstone Regional Council and the Together Gladstone program in collaboration with Gladstone Area Promotion and Development Limited (GAPDL), which will undoubtedly support the revitalisation and resumption of cruising for our region."

GPC Chief Executive Officer Craig Haymes said East Shores is the red carpet to the Port City, with the multi-award-winning parklands offering visitors a beautiful entrance to explore the region.

"With world class facilities, hectares of green space, a water play park and plenty of walking paths, cruise ship day is a wonderful day for visitors and the entire community alike," Mr Haymes said.

GAPDL Tourism Manager Nicola Scurr said to coincide with the return of cruise ships, the East Shores Precinct will once again be home to the Feast on East Markets.

"We'd love for the community to come along to view the cruise ship dock, take a wander through our modern markets which is a free event showcasing local art, handicraft and enticing cuisine, soak up the sun and ambiance or relax and enjoy the local entertainment," Ms Scurr said.

"In addition to the Feast on East Markets, we have been working with our local businesses and tourism operators to ensure that every cruise passenger is pleasantly surprised with what's on offer while they're here."

Transport and Main Roads Minister Mark Bailey said the return of cruising to Gladstone is big news for the booming region.

"We're backing regional tourism like never before, and it's excellent to see the recently completed cruise terminal at Gladstone Port put to good use," Mr Bailey said.

"Investments in infrastructure at our publicly owned ports pay dividends in economic benefits to communities, which we'll see in action in Gladstone from November when the first cruise ship in two years is welcomed to the region."

Member for Gladstone Glenn Butcher said the return of cruise ships will strengthen business confidence in the region and congratulated the Queensland Government on making it happen.

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“The Palaszczuk Government had a vision for Gladstone, to make it a world-class cruise destination and through hard work and investment, that’s been able to happen,” Mr Butcher said.

“Since the first cruise ship docked in Gladstone, our city – and particularly East Shores – has undergone a massive transformation that includes the waterfront terminal, water play park and, excitingly, construction is underway on the new Auckland Hill viewing platform.

“The Palaszczuk Government is serious about good jobs, better services and a great lifestyle and the return of cruise tourists to our shores is a certified boost to the economy and a reminder to travellers that Gladstone is the place to be.

“We can also assure our community the Queensland, New South Wales and Victorian Governments have worked together, in close partnership with the cruise industry, to support the safe resumption of cruising across the eastern states.”

For all enquiries on cruise ship arrivals, or Feast on East Markets, visit gladstoneregion.info or call Gladstone Area Promotion and Development Limited on (07) 4972 4000.

Alternatively, stay up to date by following the GAPDL and Feast on East Markets Facebook pages.

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Media contact:

Nicola Scurr

Tourism Manager

Gladstone Area Promotion and Development Limited

(07) 4972 4000

tourismmanager@gapdl.com.au