

Cruise ships set to dock in Margaret River region

Visitors will soon be able to arrive in the Margaret River region by cruise ship, following an announcement that the Capes region will officially be included in P & O Cruises' 2015 cruise program from Fremantle.

The venture is a collaborative initiative between the City of Busselton and P & O Cruises, and incorporates Busselton as the base location for the ships to dock and from which passengers can explore the Margaret River region.

Currently two cruises are set to visit the region in April and May 2015, bringing approximately 2,000 people to the region at a time.

Augusta Margaret River Tourism Association's (AMRTA) Acting CEO Jayme Hatcher said cruise shipping development in the South West, and in particular Busselton, was tremendous news.

"This is a sensational initiative from the City of Busselton and P & O Cruises," said Ms Hatcher.

"To bring 2,000 visitors [per cruise] to the region, of which approximately 80% will disembark and explore the diverse range of outstanding tourism product in the Capes region, is a momentous achievement."

"It is certainly good news for tourism and the regional economy – the financial impact is sure to be manifest," said Ms Hatcher.

"The AMRTA fully supports this venture, and all parties involved in securing this partnership should be commended for their efforts."

In announcing the launch of Margaret River cruising, P & O Cruises Senior Vice President Tammy Marshall said the region and the line's short break cruise offering made for a perfect combination.

"At P & O Cruises, we couldn't be more excited about cruising to the Margaret River region," Ms Marshall said.

"I have no doubt it will become a very special destination for our passengers and the region will also benefit from the economic activity cruising will deliver."

Adding another exciting dimension to the Margaret River cruises, passengers will come ashore at Busselton's historic jetty — at 1.8km, the longest jetty in the Southern Hemisphere.

"Busselton is an ideal docking location for the Capes region, as visitors will embark at the iconic Busselton Jetty, and dispersal is easy from that location at the present time," said Ms Hatcher.

"There will also be opportunities for Augusta to be included on itineraries once the new boat harbour development is completed, which is an exciting prospect for the future."

Day tour packages are to be developed to take cruise passengers into the heart of the Margaret River region including visits to a selection of wineries, craft breweries and local gourmet food producers.

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