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RECORD CRUISE SEASON FOR NSW

A record 302 ships are expected to visit Sydney this financial year – twenty more than the previous year, bringing more than half a million passengers to the city’s shores.

Minister for Maritime Duncan Gay said the cruise industry continued to be the fastest growing tourism sector in Australia with no signs of cruise ship visits to Sydney slowing.

“The growing trend of cruising has cemented Sydney's place as the premier and unrivalled cruise destination in Australia and the South Pacific,” Mr Gay said.

Latest statistics from the 2015 economic impact study released by the Cruise Lines Industry Association shows that the cruise industry is worth $3.6 billion nationally, with 67 per cent attributed to NSW.

The record season comes at a time when the NSW Government has invested in new facilities and infrastructure to ensure Sydney can continue to cater for existing cruise ships, and attract new ones from around the world.

The upgraded Overseas Passenger Terminal (OPT) at Circular Quay opened in October last year with refurbished cruise facilities to significantly improve processing capabilities and enhance passenger experience and ship turnaround time.

“OPT is Australia’s premier cruise gateway and the new facility meets ship turnaround time needs better than ever before,” Mr Gay said.

“Faster turnaround means more cruise liners can come into the Harbour on any one day – potentially doubling the amount of cruises offered to tourists wanting to visit one of the best harbours in the world.

“The upgrade also meant two cruise ships could dock at OPT at the same time in February.”

Work will also start this month to install a new super mooring at the southern end of the OPT, which will allow access for the the next generation of cruise ships which hold up to 5000 passengers. It will be used for the first time in December when mega-liner Ovation of the Seas arrives.

“Ovation of the Seas measures 348 metres long and weighs more than 168,000 tonnes – it will be the first time Sydney hosts a newly-launched cruise ship, a mantle usually reserved for ports in North America and Europe,” Mr Gay said.

Work on the mooring will involve the installation of four piles, a concrete pile cap and two kidney-shaped mooring bollards and is expected to be completed by September.

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