



MEDIA RELEASE

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Australian Cruise Numbers Hit New High

The number of Australians taking a cruise holiday reached an all time high of almost half a million in 2010, according to figures released today.

The International Cruise Council Australasia (ICCA) 2010 Australian Cruise Industry Report reveals that cruise passenger numbers surged by a massive 27 per cent last year, with a total of 466,692 Australians holidaying at sea, compared to 366,721 in 2009.

The 100,000 passenger increase represents the largest hike in annual passenger numbers since the industry figures were first compiled nine years ago.

Since 2002, the number of Australians taking cruise holidays has risen by 306 per cent from 116,308 passengers to 466,692, achieving an average annual growth rate of 19 per cent.

The annual growth in Australian cruise passenger numbers in 2010 was one of the highest for the international cruise sector last year, with only New Zealand registering a larger increase of 36 per cent, though from a much smaller base. Other key source markets recorded growth with North America increasing 6 per cent in 2010, the UK 6 per cent, Germany 19 per cent, France 12 per cent and Italy 11 per cent.

ICCA Chairman Gavin Smith said Australians' increasing appetite for cruising reflected an increase in the number of cruise ships sailing in local waters during the year and the stronger Australian dollar.

"Australians now have a record number of cruise ships sailing from our shores throughout the year and clearly this is enticing more people to try a holiday at sea," Mr Smith said.

"We've also seen encouraging growth in international cruising, particularly in markets like Europe where cruising provides an easy, relaxing way to see multiple destinations and the strength of the Australian dollar makes it more affordable."

The top destination for Australian cruise passengers was the South Pacific, which accounted for 37 per cent of the market (171,857 passengers), while Australia attracted 19 per cent (90,751) and New Zealand 10 per cent (46,643).

Europe and Asia attracted 8 per cent of passengers (35,061 and 37,267 respectively), while Alaska appealed to 4 per cent (19,018) and 6 per cent of cruise passengers (28,587) opted for a river cruise.

In terms of market growth, Australian numbers rose 36 per cent from 2009, while New Zealand grew 32 per cent and South Pacific increased 25 per cent. Europe ocean cruise numbers surged 51 per cent, river cruising was up 12 per cent and Alaska numbers increased by 8 per cent. The largest growth for any destination was 71 per cent for Other Americas, which includes destinations such as Hawaii and the Caribbean, with numbers rising from 12,381 in 2009 to 21,233 last year.

Mr Smith said the 2010 result equated to 2.1 per cent of the Australian population taking a cruise, compared to 1.7 per cent in 2009. Market penetration in North America is 3.1 per cent and in the UK 2.6 per cent.

The data also shows a slight growth in the proportion of shorter cruises of seven days or less (from around 35 per cent to 37 per cent) while longer cruises of 15 days or more fell from about 21 per cent to 16 per cent. Estimated annual sea days rose by 18 per cent to about 4.7 million in 2010.

Founded in 1996, the Cruise Council is a not-for-profit organisation committed to training travel consultants and raising consumer awareness of cruising. It represents 25 cruise lines offering cruises to the Australian market. The 2010 Australian Cruise Industry Statistics were compiled by InTouch Data Pty Ltd.

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