



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **Australian Cruise Industry Reports Record Year**

The number of Australians taking a cruise holiday surged by 26 per cent last year to reach a record 330,949 passengers, according to new statistics released today.

The International Cruise Council Australasia figures reveal that despite the economic downturn the local cruise industry last year experienced its strongest growth in five years, with Australia, New Zealand and South Pacific cruises attracting the largest numbers of passengers.

News of the growth comes in the midst of Australia's biggest ever cruise season, with a record number of ships operating in Australian waters from October 2008 to April 2009.

The 26 per cent increase in 2008 passenger numbers is more than five times the 5 per cent growth recorded by the US market in 2008 and double the estimated 12 per cent growth for the UK cruise market.

Announcing the figures, Cruise Council Chairman Karen Christensen said the record year was a result of increased capacity in the market, greater itinerary options and growing awareness of cruising as a great value holiday.

"In these tougher times cruise holidays have more appeal than ever because they include transport, accommodation, meals and entertainment in one fare," Ms Christensen said.

Ms Christensen said the latest figures revealed that river cruising continued to capture the imaginations of Australians, with European river cruising numbers more than doubling from 11,761 in 2007 to 27,645 in 2008.

The statistics also show:

- Total passenger numbers rose from 263,435 in 2007 to 330,949 in 2008 (up 26 per cent)
- The most popular cruise destination in 2008 was Australia/New Zealand/South Pacific, representing 59 per cent of the market (195,611) and posting growth of 22 per cent on 2007
- Europe (river cruising and ocean cruising) ranked as the second most popular destination, representing 16 per cent of the market (52,291) – an increase of 61 per cent on 2007 figures
- Asia was the third most popular cruising destination for Australians, attracting 10 per cent (34,430) with numbers rising by 45 per cent on 2007 figures
- Estimated annual sea days rose by 45 per cent to more than 3.5 million in 2008, revealing more Australians are cruising for a longer time
- Australian cruise passenger numbers have grown a massive 185 per cent from 116,308 in 2002, the first year they were recorded.

Founded in 1996, the Cruise Council represents 25 cruise lines offering cruises to the Australian market. The 2008 Australian Cruise Industry Statistics were compiled by InTouch Data Pty Ltd.

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