

ANN SHERRY THROWS THE TOURISM INDUSTRY A LIFELINE

With the cruise sector recording stunning growth and forging ahead with aggressive expansion plans the pre-eminent *Tourism Futures* conference has secured Ann Sherry, CEO of Carnival Australia – the largest cruise operator in the country – to give a keynote address to the tourism industry in August.

Cruising is the fastest growing segment of tourism. In 2008 the number of Australians taking a cruise holiday grew by 26% - the fifth consecutive year of growth.

Economic activity generated by the cruise industry is expected to reach \$1 billion in 2009 up from \$734 million in 2006/2007 fiscal year.

“Carnival Australia has achieved some impressive results with Ann Sherry at the helm, and we are looking forward to hearing how it has tackled the current challenges with such overwhelming success,” said Mr Tony Charters, Tourism Futures convenor.

“To have a sector performing so strongly in these difficult times is very exciting and the rest of the tourism industry can learn from and be inspired by such an outstandingly successful business.”

Ann Sherry confirmed the strength of Carnival Australia’s performance.

“This Summer, Carnival Australia alone carried a record 168,000 passengers – up 20 per cent from last cruise season,” said Ms Sherry.

“The future promises to be even bigger, with our recent announcement that P&O Cruises will double its Australian fleet over the next two years.

“There is growing interest from Australians in taking a cruising holiday, and the value message of cruising is clearly resonating with a travelling public looking to maximise every holiday dollar.”

Tourism Futures emerged in 2002 in the wake of 9/11 and the loss of Ansett so the conference has a history of bringing industry and government to together in difficult times.

This crucial gathering will held on the **Gold Coast from 17 – 19 August at the Surfers Paradise Marriott Resort & Spa.**

Established by Tourism Queensland, the conference is also sponsored by Tourism Australia, Queensland's Department for Tourism, Regional Development and Industry and Gold Coast Tourism.

Tourism Futures is the most prestigious and highly regarded industry forum, attracting corporate leaders and government policy makers from across all sectors of the industry.

Issues addressed at the conference include engaging with Asia-Pacific, responding to climate change, the dearth of new product being developed in Australia, destination development and the need to embrace online technology.

"It is a critical time for the industry to pull together and to set a course to survive this horror stretch in the short term and establish some common platforms for success into the future," said Mr Charters.

To register for the conference, visit www.tourismfutures.com.au

-ends-

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Michelle Farquhar
0432 334 994
michelle@tonycharters.com

Tony Charters
Convenor, Tourism Futures
0418 122 025
tony@tonycharters.com