

Tourism industry's cruising

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Liners boost state by \$1.1b as ship numbers soar

QUEENSLAND'S cruise ship industry is steaming ahead, in a \$1.1 billion bonanza for the economy last year alone.

New data to be released today reveals a 70 per cent increase in the number of cruise ship visits to Queensland in the past three years, with direct spending from cruise passengers rising almost \$250 million during the same period.

The new figures come as work continues on the \$158 million Brisbane International Cruise Terminal at Luggage Point, while the State Government continues to pursue more of the world's cruising companies to set sail for Queensland on a regular basis.

Cruising remains one of the fastest-growing sectors in the

tourism industry. New figures show the number of ships visiting Queensland ports has risen from 275 four years ago to 468 in the 2016-17 financial year.

Spending by passengers rose from \$349 million in 2014-15 to \$590 million last year, while the total value of cruise ships to the Queensland economy more than doubled

from \$402 million to more than \$1.1 billion.

Queensland Tourism Minister Kate Jones said Queensland's cruise ship industry was now the envy of the country, with ports from Brisbane to the Great Barrier Reef.

"More cruise ships ported in Queensland last year than any other state – we're dominating

this sector," she said. "This industry now supports 4330 jobs in Queensland, and we're working hard to grow that number by negotiating with cruise companies to secure more bookings at our ports.

"Cruise shipping is a huge growth market for tourism."

Ms Jones said extra and expanded cruising infrastructure

made the industry ship shape. Along with a new Brisbane facility capable of handling the world's largest ocean liners, an upgraded port in Cairns will welcome an extra 100 ships a year once works are completed, in an \$850 million boost to Tropical North Queensland Tourism.

Last month Bundaberg welcomed its first cruise ship, while plans for a terminal on the Gold Coast are also being developed.