



P&O Pacific Partnership Expands Reach in South Pacific with Two New Programs After \$1m Raised in Contributions

March 27, 2017

The P&O Pacific Partnership is expanding its reach in the South Pacific with two new community programs, after surpassing a milestone of one million dollars in voluntary contributions from passengers and special donations in only four years.

Building on previous funding of health posts and kindergartens in Vanuatu, the two new projects are aimed at assisting women and young children in Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands, working in conjunction with Save the Children Australia.

Both PNG and the Solomons receive regular cruise calls by P&O Cruises' ships. In 2017 alone, 11 P&O cruises will visit Papua New Guinea, with three of those cruises visiting Gizo Island and Honiara in the Solomons.

In PNG particularly, there is a pressing need to improve health outcomes for mothers and children. The maternal mortality rate there is 30 times greater than in Australia with its highly developed health services. Only 40 per cent of newborn deliveries are assisted by a skilled birth attendant in PNG, with the rates declining further in more rural areas of the country.

The new Newborn Baby and Birthing Kits Project in PNG encourages mothers to have their babies delivered at health centres by helping to cover health facility medical fees and providing essential supplies such as infant care items and mosquito nets to combat the transmission of malaria to newborn babies.

In the Solomon Islands, P&O Cruises is now supporting the Solomons Early Childhood Development Project, which integrates child protection with community-based early childhood interventions to ensure children grow up in protective environments that enable them to realise their full potential.

Many children in the Solomon Islands do not have access to early childhood education and development services, and enter school underprepared, often leading to longer term issues.

"Launching two new projects in the P&O Pacific Partnership is testament to the support and engagement of the thousands of guests who sail with us each year. It's thanks to our passengers that we're able to assist even more communities that we visit," P&O Cruises President Sture Myrmell said.

"The voluntary one dollar contributions made via passengers' onboard accounts are relatively modest but when these contributions are combined they become a powerful force to make a big difference where it matters most."

P&O first formed its Pacific Partnership with Save the Children in 2013.

"Since the partnership began, P&O passengers have helped to construct two new kindergartens and build or rehabilitate six health posts in Vanuatu, significantly improving the educational and health outcomes for many children and their families," said Save the Children's Vanuatu Country Director Georgia Tacey.

"The latest fundraising projects will help to make a huge difference to the lives of pregnant women and provide primary and secondary aged school children with opportunities for a brighter future." Passengers directly contribute to the work carried out through an automatic \$1 donation to their onboard account. This donation is for guests over the age of 18 on all cruises. Guests can choose to opt out of the program if they wish – or donate more, through the onboard donation boxes.

In addition, the Navigational chart from each voyage is auctioned at the end of every cruise with all proceeds also going to Save the Children.

About P&O Cruises

Sailing local waters for almost 85 years, P&O is Australia and New Zealand's only homegrown cruise line and the largest cruise operator in the region, offering a fleet of five ships cruising year round from eight home ports in Australia, New Zealand and Singapore. With a contemporary look and feel, P&O's ships carry more than 460,000 guests a year on great value holidays. Itineraries range from short getaways and cruises exploring the Australian coast to longer holidays to the South Pacific and exotic destinations such as Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands and Asia. In June 2017 P&O Cruises will welcome its latest ship, Pacific Explorer, while in 2019 it will take delivery of its largest ever ship, a 3000-guest, 113,000-tonne vessel which will be the biggest ship ever to be based full time in Australia.

Contact: Libby Moffet/Christine Allen
MG Media Communications
Ph: 02 9904 0011 0418 310 191