

Responses from our Councillors, candidates and Ministers regarding Cruise Ships in Jervis Bay

Council

Mayor Amanda Findley

The Port Authority spoke to Shoalhaven Council about their plans and they were advised by Council that they needed to engage with the community quickly instead of leaving us in the dark about their proposals.

I believe that they have a good set of protocol's to govern cruise ships especially in regards to waste and ballast. That being said, I don't think that our beautiful and fragile bay should be exposed to any possibility of mishap that has the potential to irreversibly damage the bay. We have such a unique asset and I don't believe that some of these assets have been fully assessed and our understanding of how they work in the complex underwater ecosystem is perhaps not what it needs to be.

Aesthetically having large cruise ships parked in the bay, gives the bay a far more commercial feel. If there is to be further commercialization in the bay I would far rather see the expansion of the mussel industry than cruise ships, at least food production is a far more noble use of the waters of JB than just pure escapism and entertainment

Deputy Mayor Greg Watson

I do have reservations about the value of shore parties for a number of reasons.

The modern Cruise Ship is designed to process passengers and remove their money which means the discretionary spend on shore is mainly restricted to buying trinkets, having paid for the meals on board passengers are unlikely to want to pay twice.

With covid 19 and its variants the ongoing risk of spreading infection is very real. Anyone who has had experience of ship travel will know first hand how the flue and colds spreads so easily on board. Even with vaccination the outcome of the programme is substantially unknown and overseas the delta variant and some others more deadly which are emerging, place severe doubt if the World will ever return to what could be called normal. Because of the age demographic of our area, subject to the communities opinion, I am inclined say apply the precautionary principle, and say no to shore parties.

Councillor Nina Digiglio

... regarding the cruise ships. I agree with all your suggestions and would add the inclusion of our Aboriginal Communities for their contributions as well, particularly the CEO of Booderee National Park and the Wreck Bay Land Council.

Councillor Kaye Gartner

I am not in favour of cruise ships in Jervis Bay. Local people, especially the local Indigenous people, campaigned hard for the creation of the Jervis Bay Marine Park. They did it to preserve it as a beautiful natural place, not to create product and profit for a cruise line company.

Cruise ships pre Covid 19 contributed 3% to annual GHG emissions, globally. Covid exposed the poor management of risks to the wellbeing of employees and passengers alike

Councillor John Levett

The health of the Bay should be the first consideration in any discussion on the subject.

Councillor John Wells

There are many questions that need to be answered such as how will the vessels be moored- fixed mooring or swing anchor? What are the expected impacts on the bed of the Bay? How will passengers be conveyed to shore? If by tender what impacts will it have on existing port operations? If cruise operators plan guided tours to other local attractions, what arrangements and impacts arise from busses on local traffic, road and parking infrastructure./ and their 'spend' may not be in JB or the Husky area. There's obviously little impact on accommodation providers. Are the visits to be for a limited season each year and how many visits are anticipated?

Councillor Patricia White

I oppose any cruise ships in Jervis Bay no matter what the size. As a Councillor, I have been provided limited information over the last few months on this issue. The only exception would be if there was an emergency and a cruise ship needed to enter.

I have followed the concerns/issues at White Bay in Sydney and other destination ports around Qld, NSW and Vic. I am aware of many concerns/issues from residents and communities in these destination ports which are poorly handled by operators in my opinion. I would hate to see any of these concerns/issues come to Jervis Bay.

I agree that Jervis Bay Community Cruise Ship Coalition should be a stakeholder in any consultation and discussions into the future regarding Cruise ships in Jervis Bay

Candidates for Council elections

Candidate Evan Christen

I also have great concerns regarding cruise ships in Jervis Bay. Overall I oppose cruise visitation to Jervis bay. The main reasons for this are:

1) Jervis Bay is a marine park, more than that should be a 'National Treasure' and have National Heritage Status as the last large bay on the south east coast of Australia that is in a relatively natural condition. As such cruise ship visitation is incompatible with retaining the current biophysical, cultural and social aspects of the bay

2) Jervis bay and surrounds depend economically on maintaining Jervis Bay in its current state. The tourism that comes to Jervis Bay is drawn here by its more local character and smaller scale compared to other mass tourism destinations. The tourism sector is based on mainly families spending several nights in the area undertaking family holiday style tourism. Cruise ship visitation will bring visitors for a few hours, who will spend very little, but will put extra strain on infrastructure and take away from the appeal that brings family holidays.

3) Jervis bay is a highly sensitive environment that has to date been relatively well protected. This has allowed for high value businesses to establish such as mariculture, diving, whale/dolphin watching and recreational fishing. These businesses work well with the current tourism sector. Cruise ship visitation risks are associated with:

a) water pollution - cruise ships are notorious for water pollution events due to wastewater, solids, oils etc.

b) seabed damage - anchoring will disrupt the seabed

c) noise pollution - running of engines will create noise in the air and water.

d) air pollution - engines will discharge particulates

e) water disturbance and space takeover - large ship movements and anchoring may affect wildlife especially mammals, affect smaller vessels

f) vista pollution - cruise ships in the bay will disrupt the visual appeal of the bay

Note that although the Navy are already in the Jervis Bay this is not a sound argument to have cruise ships in the bay. There is usually only one Navy ship in the bay, thus the effects are at a minimum and the operations and procedures followed by Navy and cruise ships are not comparable

Candidate Jo Warren

The lack of community consultation and transparency by the Port Authority is worrying and I believe that the community needs to be vigilant to ensure that this scoping study does not result in cruise ships in the bay.

The belief that cruise ships are of benefit to the community is misplaced with many more negatives than positives.

The impacts on the pristine nature of the marine national park will be detrimental not only to the environment but in the long term to the tourist industry on which many locals rely on. The environmental record for cruise ships is very questionable and not one that we should risk with the consequences to Jervis Bay potentially devastating.

We must be creative and proactive in supporting small businesses that utilise the natural environment in a gentle and sustainable way and not give in to the bigger is better mentality.

The economic benefits of the cruise industry are limited given the provision of all food and drink on the ship. Additional pressure on traffic with the influx of buses to transport passengers to pre-booked sites will add to the chaos of the tourist season with Huskisson and surrounds already at capacity during these times.

Candidate John Kotlash

My response to this is easy. The cruising model, in any size ship is disastrous for the environment. I do not support allowing cruise ships into Jervis Bay. I will fight to stop any visitations by cruise ships. The environment in JB is too precious and too significant for it to even be considered. Should a company eventually develop an electric powered cruise ship, that dumps no bilge water and has a shallow draught and wants to bring less than 50 people to our bay, I might consider it. But that's a long time away.

Jervis Bay has a great local community. We are happy with the way our community works. Cruise ships in Jervis Bay will NOT help us keep the amenity of our coastal villages.

Ministers and Port Authority

Port Authority CEO – Philip Holliday

I can advise you that Port Authority of NSW has no current proposals, plans or strategies to allow cruise ships to have access to Jervis Bay.

Port Authority of NSW has identified further investigation, government agency approvals and significant engagement with local stakeholders and the community is required to assess regular cruise visitation opportunities in Jervis Bay and other minor regional ports.

Given the current Commonwealth Government ban on cruising due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and to ensure the approach to this developing regional cruise opportunity is well planned and consulted widely in advance, external consultation on expanding cruise opportunities in regional NSW is on hold until further notice.

I understand that the Jervis Bay Community CruiseShip Coalition would have great interest in Jervis Bay as a future cruise destination for boutique and expedition cruise ships and, should discussions resume, we will certainly engage with you as a key community stakeholder.