

CRUISE NEWCASTLE

2025-26 PASSENGER SURVEY



Cruise Ship Newcastle Harbour
Credit: Destination NSW



Mount Pleasant Wines, Hunter Valley



CoastXP, Newcastle



Newy Tour Co, Newcastle



Destination
Sydney Surrounds North

www.dssn.com.au/cruise



Rustica, Newcastle
Credit: Destination NSW

2025-26 PASSENGER SURVEY

The 2025–26 Cruise Newcastle Passenger Survey was undertaken between 19 October 2025 and 31 March 2026 to assess visitor satisfaction and understand the likelihood of cruise passengers returning to Newcastle and Surrounds. The survey forms part of the regions ongoing commitment to monitoring visitor experience, strengthening destination performance, and identifying opportunities for continued improvement.

Passengers were surveyed across five of the six* cruise ship arrivals during the 2025–26 season:

1. Silver Nova – 19 October 2025
2. Celebrity Edge – 13 December 2025
3. Viking Venus – 23 February 2026
4. Crown Princess – 20 March 2026
5. Viking Orion – 31 March 2026

The results demonstrate strong visitor sentiment and reinforce Newcastle’s position as a high-quality cruise destination. Key findings include:

- An average overall experience rating of 4.5 out of 5.
- More than 83% of respondents reported that their expectations were met during their visit.
- Over 80% indicated they would return to Newcastle and Surrounds.

These insights provide valuable guidance for ongoing destination development, stakeholder collaboration, and continuous improvement of the cruise visitor experience.

**MV The World was not surveyed as different from traditional cruise ship transit calls. The World is the largest privately-owned residential yacht. Instead of booking a temporary cabin, passengers are actual property owners.*



Sand Dune Adventures, Port Stephens
Credit: Destination NSW

SURVEY APPROACH

Cruise ship passengers were invited to complete a short survey following their onshore visit to Newcastle. Passengers surveyed were those utilising the shuttle bus service from the Port of Newcastle to the CBD. As there were insufficient surveys undertaken of passengers who took shore excursion tours these results have not been included in the report.

For the 2026-27 cruise season, it is anticipated that a further passenger survey will be undertaken, with an increased focus on capturing insights from cruise passengers taking shore excursion tours.

A total of 178 surveys* were completed across the five cruise ship arrivals, during which 6,919 passengers came ashore. Respondents were asked to rate their experience on a five-point scale, where 1 indicated highly unsatisfied, 3 indicated satisfied, and 5 indicated highly satisfied.

Sample survey questions are provided in **Appendix 1**.

**The data collected provides an indication of overall satisfaction trends, with a margin of error of approximately 7% at a 95% confidence level.*

The survey was undertaken by Destination Sydney Surrounds North in partnership with the Port Authority of NSW and the Newcastle Tourism Industry Group.

Newcastle
Credit: Destination NSW



FINDINGS

The following sections present the key findings from the 2025–26 Cruise Newcastle Passenger Survey, outlining passenger perceptions of their overall experience, expectations, likelihood of return visitation, and satisfaction with local services and amenities.

The results also provide demographic insights that help contextualise visitor sentiment and identify opportunities to further enhance the cruise experience in Newcastle and Surrounds.

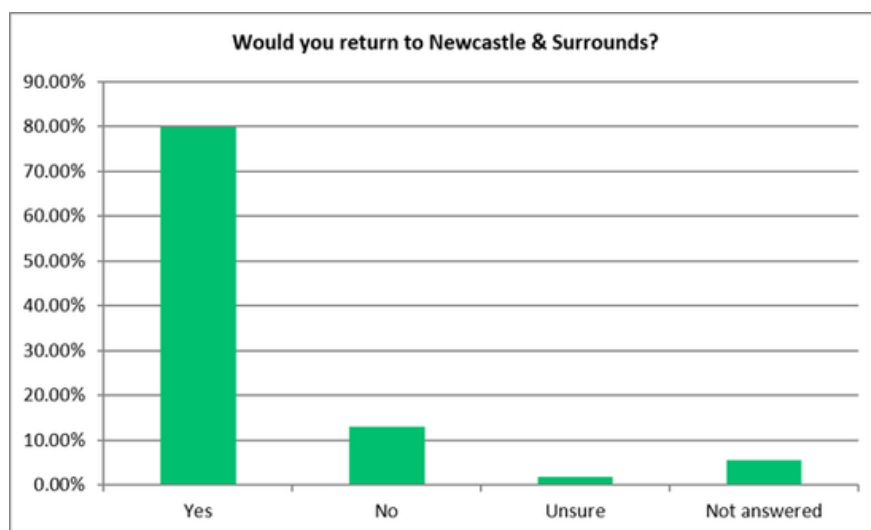
THE NEWCASTLE EXPERIENCE

- The overall Newcastle experience rated highly achieving a rating of 4.5 out of 5. This rating is supported by high scores across the majority of destination services and amenities.
- Over 83% advised that their visit to Newcastle met their expectations.
- Passengers were able to provide feedback on what could be improved with shopping, retail opening hours on Sunday and improved visitor signage being key items identified.



RETURN VISITATION

- Almost 80% advised that they would return to Newcastle and Surrounds. This is high considering that over 62% of the passengers surveyed were from overseas.
- Repeat visitation by cruise passengers to the region is key to driving increased economic benefit to the visitor economy from the cruise market.

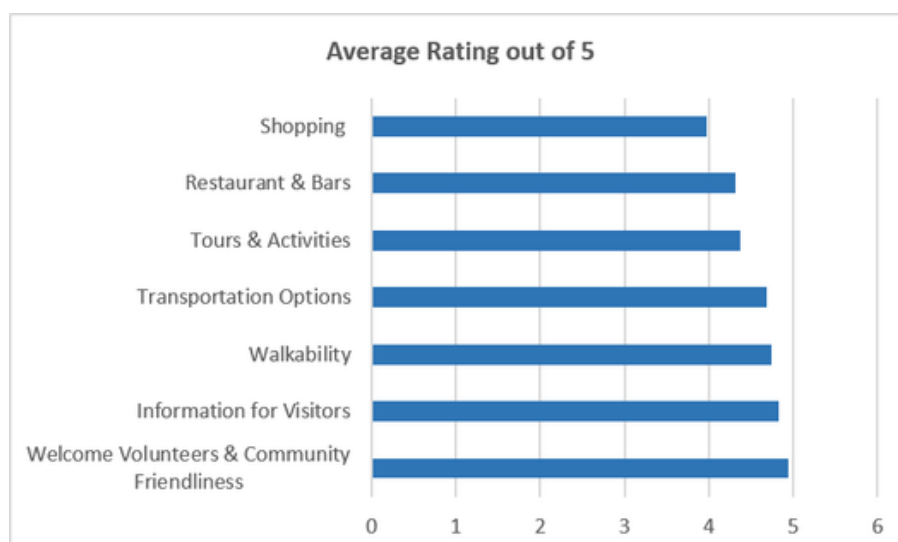




Newcastle Museum
Credit: Destination NSW

DESTINATION SERVICES AND AMENITIES

- Cruise passengers were asked to rate a range of destination services and amenities. All rated over four expect shopping which achieved an average of 3.98. There is an opportunity to develop trails to promote the bespoke shopping experiences in Newcastle showcasing local artisans and the unique retail outlets.
- The top-rated services were the Welcome Volunteers and Information for Visitors which highlights the importance of the Welcome Volunteers and the Visitor Centre to assist passengers to have an enjoyable experience in Newcastle.
- The Welcome Volunteer program, managed by the Newcastle Tourism Industry Group, is regularly recognised for the high level of professional and friendly service they provide to cruise passengers.
- Transportation options and walkability in Newcastle both scored above 4.5, indicating that cruise passengers are actively exploring and engaging with the city.



Avoca Beach, Central Coast
Credit: Destination NSW



GEOGRAPHIC SOURCE

- Of the passengers surveyed, 62% were international and 38% were domestic.
- Approximately 60% of international passengers were from the USA, 23% from the United Kingdom and around 4% each from Europe and New Zealand.
- Domestic passengers were primarily from NSW 45%, Qld 30% and Victoria 20%.

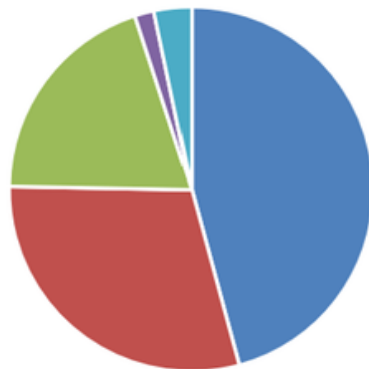
Source of International Passengers Surveyed



■ USA ■ UK ■ Europe ■ New Zealand ■ Other

Other - Canada, Philippines, Hong Kong & South Africa

Source of Domestic Passengers Surveyed



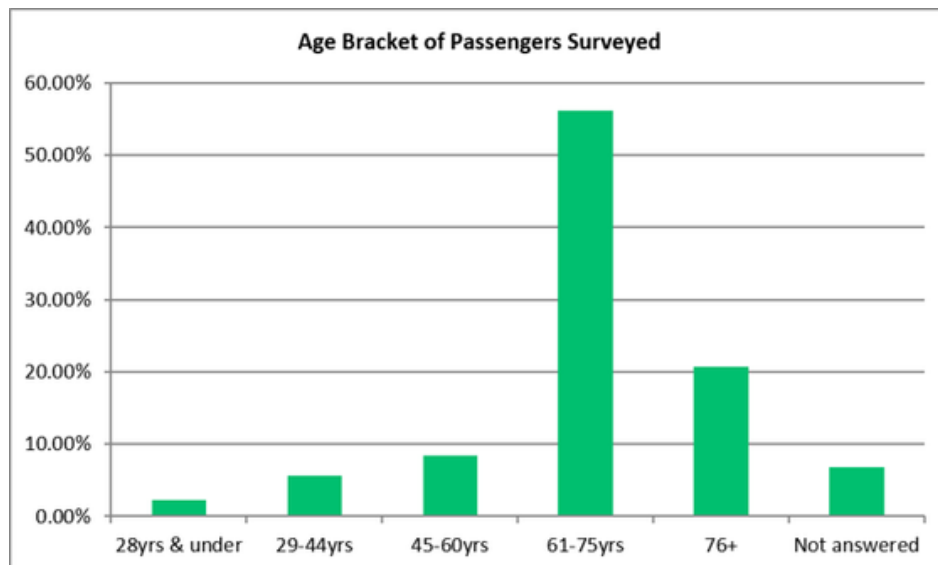
■ NSW ■ Qld ■ Vic ■ WA ■ SA

Illalung Park, Morpeth
Credit: Destination NSW



DEMOGRAPHIC

- Over half of the passengers surveyed were aged 61-75yrs.
- As three of the five cruise ships surveyed were luxury longer cruises, it is expected that a greater proportion of more mature travellers would be onboard.



APPENDIX 1

Cruise Newcastle Passenger Survey

We appreciate your time to complete this short survey. Please provide your cabin number to enter the draw to win a bottle of Hunter Valley wine. The winner will be drawn today and the prize provided to the cruise ship prior to departure. Full terms and conditions are available over page.



SATISFACTION RATING: 1 HIGHLY UNSATISFIED TO 5 HIGHLY SATISFIED	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
Overall Newcastle Experience	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Welcome Volunteers & Community Friendliness	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Information for Visitors	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Tours & Activities	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Restaurants & Bars	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Shopping	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Transportation Options	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Walkability	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

DID YOU TAKE AN ORGANISED SHORE TOUR? ☐ Yes ☐ No (skip to next question)

Which destination did you visit?
☐ Newcastle ☐ Hunter Valley ☐ Port Stephens ☐ Lake Macquarie ☐ Central Coast
☐ Morpeth/Maitland Other _____

What was the price of your shore excursion?
☐ Inclusive ☐ \$50-\$100 ☐ \$100-\$200 ☐ \$200-\$300 ☐ \$300-\$400 ☐ \$500 +

Rate your shore excursion out of 5 (1 highly unsatisfied to 5 highly satisfied)
 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐

DID YOUR VISIT TO NEWCASTLE MEET YOUR EXPECTATIONS? ☐ Yes ☐ No How could we improve your visit to Newcastle and surrounds? _____ _____ _____ _____	WOULD YOU RETURN TO NEWCASTLE & SURROUNDS? ☐ Yes ☐ No
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WHERE DO YOU LIVE? Australia (postcode) _____ International (country of residence): _____	AGE BRACKET ☐ 28 & under ☐ 29-44yrs ☐ 45-60yrs ☐ 61-75yrs ☐ 76+
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Today's date: / / Cabin number for prize draw: #

GOOD LUCK AND THANK YOU!

COMPETITION TERMS & CONDITIONS OVER PAGE...



Memorial Walk Newcastle
Credit: Destination NSW

Cruise Newcastle 2025-26 Cruise Passenger survey Report

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