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New wave of hope for city traders

AN unprecedented three cruise ships in Adelaide at the same time this coming summer has sparked calls for another early Sunday opening for city shops to cater for passengers.

There are 21 scheduled cruise-ship visits to South Australia in the coming cruise season. Three ships will be at Outer Harbor, all arriving within half an hour, early on Sunday, February 12.

“It is the first time we have had three in at once,” Flinders Ports marine operations general manager Carl Kaniva said.

The potential combined crew and passengers on the three ships totals well over 5000 people - equivalent to 15 full Qantas 747 jumbo jets.

Even if the three ships were berthed nose to tail with no gap between them, they'd take 658m of wharf.

The Athena has about 600 passengers and 260 crew and is 160m long. Celebrity Century has up to 1814 passengers, 860 crew and is 248.4m. Crystal Serenity takes 1070 passengers and 655 crew and stretches 250m.

“It will be a very busy day at the (Outer Harbour passenger) terminal,” Mr Kavina said.

“We'll put the Athena at No. 1 berth, because passengers will be joining or leaving that ship.”

However, passengers will be coming off the other two ships, spread up to No. 4 berth, to do booked coach tours or to travel into the city for sightseeing and shopping. The ships will depart between 5pm and 11pm that night.

Last summer, two large ships at Outer Harbor on the one Sunday led to Rundle Mall shops opening at 9am instead of the usual 11am.

South Australian Tourism Industry Council chief executive Ward Tilbrook said the three ships on the one day this coming summer presented a chance for traders again by opening Rundle Mall shops early “and welcoming visitors to a vibrant, colourful city”.

“Cruise passengers are big business for our day trip destinations, tour companies and attractions,” Mr Tilbrook said.

“Three cruise ships and 5000 people one Sunday this summer is a great coup for tourism.”

He said many of the visitors would leave as ambassadors for SA with a desire to return.

The cruise season in Adelaide will run from September 28 to April 6 and includes a visit by the Queen Mary 2 on March 3.

Industrial Relations Minister Russell Wortley said any application for shopping hours exemption would be treated on its merits.