



## **MEDIA RELEASE** **February 16, 2015**

### **Carnival Launches Mystery Island Tours**

After five years of community consultation, Carnival Australia has launched the first shore excursions at one of the Pacific's most popular destinations – Vanuatu's Mystery Island.

Cruise passengers will now be able to try four experiences during a visit to the picturesque Vanuatu destination including a glass bottom boat tour over the aqua waters, a guided snorkel safari on the reef, a glass bottom kayak excursion and stand up paddleboarding along the beautiful bay between the uninhabited Mystery Island and nearby Aneityum where the local community lives.

Two additional cultural tours of Aneityum's Anelghowhat village will soon be available with highlights including a visit to a fish bone hut and the ruins of the Presbyterian church (once the largest in the South Pacific) where missionary John Geddie helped bring an end to cannibalism.

Located in the southernmost Tafea province, Aneityum is known as the "last island in Vanuatu". Carnival Australia Destinations Director Michael Mihajlov said cruise ships had been calling at Mystery Island for 30 years but tours had only just been introduced in the remote region due to the absence of satellite communication, fuel supply, suitable management structures and insurance coverage as well as the challenges associated with transporting a boat to the island. Kayaks and paddleboards have been progressively carried to Mystery Island on P&O Cruises and Carnival Cruise Line ships.

"It has been a long road developing these excursions and providing the necessary resources to the community to manage them but we're very excited about what the tours mean for the people of Aneityum and their beautiful cruise port Mystery Island," Mr Mihajlov said.

"We are passionate about working with the island communities we visit to create a sustainable tourism success story so that cruise ship visits deliver a positive experience for all."

While other Carnival Australia cruise lines Princess Cruises, P&O Cruises and Holland America Line will also offer the tours, Carnival Cruise Line guests became the first to try the snorkel safari, glass bottom boat and paddleboarding when Carnival Spirit called at the island on Friday.

Carnival Cruise Line Vice President Australia and New Zealand Jennifer Vandekreeke said Mystery Island was the line's most popular South Pacific destination and these tours would only make it more appealing.

"While we know our guests love simply going ashore and taking a stroll through the markets, posing for photos in the infamous cannibal pot or just enjoying the beach, these tours add a new dimension to the destination. Mystery Island is the perfect spot for a paddleboard, snorkel and glass bottom exploring and these experiences will be a real highlight for our guests," Ms Vandekreeke said.

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