



Natalie Godward with Bruce Krumrine senior vice president of port operations for Holland America Group



Natalie Godward (third from left) at the 2018 Eden Business & Community award. Cruise Eden won the Volunteer/Community Service Award

PROFILE: Natalie Godward

This month we are profiling Natalie Godward, cruise development manager for Port Authority of New South Wales. By Kendall Carter

NATALIE GODWARD WORKS FROM

Eden on the beautiful south coast of New South Wales, a wonderful natural harbour and a developing cruise destination. She manages cruise visits into all the regional ports along the NSW coastline and runs Cruise Eden for the Sapphire Coast in the far south.

GARDEN OF EDEN

Natalie took the role of Cruise Eden coordinator about five years ago when it started to become too much for volunteers in Eden. Initially this was a part-time position while she was working for Sapphire Coast tourism. Soon the role was full-time and she was organising all the shoreside aspects of cruise ships visiting Eden as well as being involved in attracting more cruise lines to the port.

Port Authority of NSW has always been a great supporter of Natalie's work for Cruise Eden and last year, as the local development of the port was ramping up, they employed her directly as their cruise development manager with the expanded role of not only looking after Eden cruise visits but also cruise visits to all the NSW regional ports.

'WHOLE COASTLINE' OPPORTUNITIES

Cruising is an expanding area and in NSW cruise ships regularly visit Sydney as well as Newcastle and now more recently, Port Kembla.

Natalie passionately believes that there is a whole coastline of opportunities and communities in NSW that would welcome cruise ships with open arms, especially

visits from the expedition and luxury segments.

In Eden, both Federal and State funding has enabled a new cruise terminal to be built, where cruise vessels are now able to berth alongside instead of remaining at anchor as used to be the case.

The Port Authority, with Natalie in the lead, is now scoping the maritime viability of several locations up and down the state's coast. On the north coast of NSW Natalie recently has been examining the possibilities for visits to Yamba, Coffs Harbour and South West Rocks, working with local stakeholders and communities along with interested cruise lines to tailor appropriate shoreside experiences for the passengers. All the other NSW regional ports will also soon be examined to see how their potential may be harnessed.

AMERICAN INSPIRATION

Natalie recently attended the SeaTrade Cruise Global Conference in Miami Beach Florida, where she was extolling the virtues of visiting NSW to cruise companies. The aim was to show off the many opportunities along the coast and bring more cruise ships to the region.

Natalie especially enjoys working with regional communities to create opportunities for cruise ship visits that boost local economies. She explains cruise vessels come in all shapes and sizes and sometimes it might just be a case of 80 people getting off a ship, eating their lunch in the local pub and visiting a few local stores, but even so it creates a great vibe and generally the community loves it.

"It is very humbling to see how a community comes together to welcome cruise visitors," Natalie said.

"In Eden for example, local volunteers, including individuals and businesses, get up very early to be there and offer the best possible experience for visiting cruise passengers."

BIGGER PICTURE

Natalie is supportive of the Nautical Institute's Women in Maritime initiative and believes it has helped remove perceived and actual barriers to entry in a traditionally male-dominated industry, by highlighting the success stories of women. She recognises you don't have to go to sea to be part of this industry and there are many varied roles and the opportunities for women to get involved. Natalie believes the maritime industry is fascinating and ever changing, with long term opportunities for growth. She would definitely recommend it as a career for women and has been actively introducing the industry to her daughters through her role, showing them what she does, and will encourage them to consider the maritime industry as a career when the time comes.

Natalie would thoroughly recommend getting involved in the industry to women starting out on their careers as well as those considering a "sea change". In her own words, "Through chance and opportunity I fell into the maritime industry and feel very grateful for that. This is the best job I have ever had, and I love working in the industry". ■