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AUSTRALIA'S BIGGEST GAME OF HIDE AND SEEK TAKES PLACE ONBOARD A MEGALINER DOCKED IN SYDNEY HARBOUR

The biggest ship to sail Australian waters plays host to competition winners from across the country in iconic childhood game re-imagined

18 February 2018: Australia's biggest cruise ship, Royal Caribbean's *Ovation of the Seas*, today hosted Australia's Biggest Game of Hide and Seek, with Ben Harrison, age 26, from Hornsby NSW, taking home the AUD\$10,000 prize, and a family cruise for four, all thanks to his stealthy hiding techniques.

In an Australian first, Aussies aged eight and over boarded the megaship docked in Sydney Harbour to play a huge version of the iconic childhood game, as part of a unique competition to celebrate 10 years of Royal Caribbean sailing Down Under.

"What an amazing day it was. The first ever official game of Hide and Seek on any ship in Australia, and I think it was a massive triumph", said *Ovation of the Seas*' Cruise Director, Joff Eaton.

"*Ovation of the Seas* is the biggest, newest and most modern cruise ship ever to sail Australian waters, and with features like bumper cars, a Bionic Bar, rock-climbing wall, iFly sky-diving tunnel, FlowRider surf simulator and the North Star viewing capsule, she really was the ultimate location for this supersized game," continued Joff.

Two games were held – one for adults aged 15 and over and another for kids aged 8-14. Competitors were picked from over 20,000 entrants and came from far and wide; NSW, QLD, NT, SA, WA, VIC - to seek out the best hiding spots onboard in an attempt to outwit the "Seekers", Australia's national Hide & Seek team The Nascondingos, who competed in the 2017 annual World Championships in Italy.

12-year-old Ryan S from Kincup in regional QLD took home the kids' prize which was a family cruise for four, after hiding from the Nascondingos under a couch. Runner up Benjamin H from NSW is also taking his family on a holiday.

Winner of the adults' game, Ben Harrison aka 'Big Red' used sheer distance as his tactic, attempting to get as far away from home base as he could in the allocated hiding time. He chose curtains to hide under in rounds one and two, and in the third – his winning spot – Ben managed to squeeze underneath a table that was concealed by a curtain. After being awarded his novelty size check, Ben said "It's a pretty big accomplishment. I am very surprised, I still have butterflies in my stomach. I'm very very happy". He and fiancé Jess will be putting the \$10,000 towards their wedding at the end of the year, and will use the cruise for their honeymoon.

The Nascondingos have heralded it their hardest game yet, "There was just a lot of ground to cover. We're short twitch athletes and we're used to five-minute rounds. These 20 minute rounds covering eight football fields really put us under pressure. It was far more challenging than we thought it would be. Curtain and couch hiding were the most popular spots" said Alan Jones, Nascondingo's Captain.

From attempts to host unofficial games in a certain Swedish furniture store, to a campaign for Hide and Seek to appear as an official exhibition sport in Tokyo in 2020, the event took place as the game gains traction as a serious sport among people of all ages.

MC for the day, TV personality Jason Dundas said of the frivolity; “I’ve been travelling the world filming Getaway from over 100 countries for 11 years and I’ve never been on a cooler ship and had more of a fun experience onboard in my life”.

With the ship almost to themselves – minus nearly 5000 guests –the unique competition encapsulates the spirit of Royal Caribbean’s new “Come Seek” brand campaign, inviting Australians to re-consider everything they think they know about cruising – and to come onboard and see for themselves.

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YouTube Video: https://youtu.be/BKc18Ts_6Cg

RCL Cruises Ltd Australia commenced operation in December 2008 as the Australian arm of global cruise holiday company Royal Caribbean Cruises Ltd. The company offers three cruise brands in Australia and New Zealand: Royal Caribbean International, Celebrity Cruises and Azamara Club Cruises. In the 2017/2018 cruise season Royal Caribbean International retains its position as the largest cruise brand in Australia, with a fleet of four incredible ships sailing in the region including Australia’s biggest, newest and most modern cruise ship, US\$1 billion Ovation of the Seas, South Pacific sisters Explorer of the Seas, Voyager of the Seas and culinary favourite Radiance of the Seas home porting in Sydney. Australia’s highest rated cruise ship Celebrity Solstice will also sail her sixth local season out of Sydney, while Azamara Club Cruises’ boutique Azamara Journey will return for a second season, visiting the west coast of Australia for the first time.

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