

3 September 2015

## **Queensland Airports Limited appoints new CEO**

The Board of Queensland Airports Limited (QAL) has announced the appointment of Chris Mills as Chief Executive Officer, effective from 16 October 2015, following an extensive candidate search.

Mr Mills, who is currently QAL's Chief Financial Officer, has more than 25 years' experience across diverse industries including tourism, property development and retail management. His appointment follows Managing Director and CEO, Dennis Chant's advice to the Board last year of his intention to retire from the organisation after 16 years in the role.

Prior to joining QAL last year, Mr Mills was General Manager of Economic Development Queensland, the State Government's commercialised unit for expediting property and infrastructure planning and development throughout Queensland. Chris started in chartered accounting firms in Australia and England which led to senior executive roles in the Australian private and public sectors. At Ardent Leisure (operators of Dreamworld, WhiteWater World and SkyPoint theme parks and attractions, among other businesses), he worked in financial and operating roles including Chief Financial Officer of the group, and General Manager of the marina division. He has also managed financial, retail and operating activities at South Bank Corporation in Brisbane.

QAL Chairman, Ms Annabelle Chaplain, praised the contribution of Mr Chant, who was the inaugural CEO, and has led QAL since June 1999.

"We extend our gratitude to Dennis for his contribution to the organisation over many years. He has overseen a period of strong growth following the privatisation of Gold Coast Airport in 1998. During Dennis's time with QAL and Gold Coast Airport Pty Ltd, he was instrumental in having Gold Coast Airport declared an international gateway, as well as overseeing significant runway and terminal expansions. He also negotiated the successful acquisition of Townsville, Mount Isa and Longreach airports, making QAL the largest operator of regional airports in Australia," she said.

Ms Chaplain said the Board also wanted to acknowledge the high regard with which Mr Chant was held, given the outstanding contribution he had made to the aviation and tourism industries during his tenure. Dennis is a member of the World Governing Board of Airports Council International (ACI) and President of ACI's Asia Pacific Regional Board. He is also a member of the Commonwealth Games Corporation Board and the Tourism and Transport Forums Advisory Board. He previously chaired Gold Coast Tourism and was a member of the Events Queensland Board.

Mr Chant said it has been a privilege leading QAL through a period of significant growth and investment.

"Over the next few years, we will be delivering on our vision to improve the customer experience at our Gold Coast and Townsville airports, with significant investment planned to upgrade our

aviation and terminal facilities. It is an appropriate time to hand over to a new CEO to lead the company through this next exciting phase," he said.

Ms Chaplain said Mr Mills's current role as CFO would enable a smooth transition into the role of CEO, allowing Mr Chant to bring forward his retirement plans by a few months.

She said Mr Mills's blend of financial, retail and operational expertise, his broad industry experience and current understanding of QAL's business made him the ideal candidate to lead QAL's growing multi-faceted operations.

"Chris's diverse international and industry experience, his leadership style, and his strong focus on QAL's key priorities and business performance since joining the company provide the Board with confidence that he will further develop the QAL team."

Mr Mills said it was an honour to follow in the footsteps of Mr Chant as QAL's CEO.

"Since joining the company, I have been impressed by the many talented people we have in the business, and the exciting opportunities we are pursuing," he said.

Ms Chaplain said Mr Chant had agreed to remain as a consultant to QAL, and the Board looked forward to his ongoing contribution.

## **ENDS**

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