

21 July 2017

**MEDIA RELEASE**

**QAL BREAKS PASSENGER RECORD IN FY17**

Queensland Airports Limited (QAL) has set a new record after welcoming more than 8.2 million passengers across its four airports in the 2017 financial year.

The result represents 2.4 per cent growth on FY16, when just over 8 million passengers moved through QAL's airports on the Gold Coast and in Townsville, Mount Isa and Longreach.

It has been a mixed year for the airports, with the Gold Coast location being the only airport to show growth. However, some positive signs are starting to emerge in the other regions for the coming year.

Results for the past two years are summarised below:

	Financial year results		
	2017	2016	Growth
<b>Gold Coast passengers</b>			
Domestic (and regional)	5,365,959	5,258,213	2.0%
New Zealand/South Pacific	567,726	521,499	8.9%
International long haul	550,993	496,393	11.0%
<b>Total passengers</b>	<b>6,484,678</b>	<b>6,276,105</b>	<b>3.3%</b>
<b>Townsville, Mount Isa and Longreach passengers</b>			
Townsville	1,576,501	1,582,884	-0.4%
Mount Isa	182,208	186,605	-2.4%
Longreach	32,231	36,447	-11.6%
<b>Total passengers</b>	<b>8,275,618</b>	<b>8,082,041</b>	<b>2.4%</b>

*\* Totals exclude transit passengers*

Gold Coast Airport achieved 3.3 per cent growth on the year prior, equating to close to 6.5 million passengers.

QAL CEO Chris Mills said Gold Coast Airport's performance was boosted by 11 per cent growth in long haul international services.

"This year we have added four additional weekly services to Kuala Lumpur, while our Hong Kong route has increased to three services each week and up to daily at peak times such as Chinese New Year," Mr Mills said.

"The capacity on these routes shows the affinity international visitors have with the Gold Coast, and likewise the appetite Gold Coasters have for holidaying in Asia.

"Domestically, we had our first full year of services to Melbourne Tullamarine with Qantas, Melbourne Avalon with Jetstar and Rockhampton/Townsville with JetGo.

“Sydney and Melbourne routes continue to be our most popular domestic services.

“It is going to be increasingly difficult to grow passenger numbers significantly until the terminal is expanded. The continuous increases in passenger movements are putting pressure on our terminal’s capacity and we look forward to completing the redevelopment program, which is being staged over the next few years.

“Some elements, including new check-in facilities and expansion of the apron capacity, will be complete by next year’s Commonwealth Games, but major works will not start until the Games are over.”

Mr Mills said while Townsville’s numbers were flat, the recent commencement of new domestic and international services provided encouraging signs for the coming year.

“The outlook for Townsville Airport is positive following the recent launch of services to Melbourne with Tigerair and Port Moresby with Air Niugini,” Mr Mills said.

“Tigerair’s reports suggest demand on the Melbourne route has been good since launching in June, particularly around school and public holidays with their core market of budget and leisure travellers.

“The increasingly positive sentiment around Townsville generally is evident, and we are planning for the coming growth. We also see Townsville as the logical FIFO hub for activity in the wider region.

“Our airport redevelopment works, the apron component of which is now underway, are ready to go ahead as soon as Qantas comes on board. We will work with our airline partners to ensure that the gateway to Townsville is growing in step with the city itself.”

Mr Mills said while Mount Isa Airport recorded a modest decline over the year, it moved into the new financial year off a strong base following five consecutive months of growth.

He said Longreach Airport’s apparent decline was exacerbated due to a change in the way its transit passengers are recorded, which if adjusted would actually reflect slight growth year on year.

“Economic conditions are challenging right now in many parts of regional Queensland, but we are here for the long haul. We are committed to growing these airports and supporting the communities they serve,” Mr Mills said.

“At Mount Isa Airport we have delivered a solar car park which generates up to 94 per cent of the terminal’s daytime energy needs, and at Longreach Airport we have concluded works to a wildlife proof fence around the airstrip to provide a more secure airside operating environment.

“Together, these projects represent investment of close to \$4 million by QAL.”

QAL is an Australian owned, Queensland based regional airport specialist group with a vision to engage customers, connect communities and provide exceptional experiences.

**Contact:** [media@qldairports.com.au](mailto:media@qldairports.com.au).