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**MEDIA RELEASE**

**QAL AND EDUROAM DEAL HELPS STUDENTS LEARN ON THE MOVE**

Gold Coast and Townsville university students and staff can now connect to their campus networks from their local airports following an agreement between Queensland Airports Limited (QAL) and AARNet (Australia's Academic and Research Network), the Australian operator of the Eduroam global wireless network access service for the research and education sector.

QAL operates Gold Coast Airport and Townsville airports and has reached the agreement in collaboration with local university partners Southern Cross and James Cook universities.

It is the first deployment of Eduroam with an airport operator in Queensland and means students can use their time while waiting for flights to complete study and connect with fellow students and teaching staff.

QAL CEO Chris Mills said the agreement would strengthen the existing relationship with the universities while facilitating better connectivity for students while on the move.

"Students will be able to better use their dwell time at the airport by accessing the Eduroam network on Gold Coast and Townsville airports' free WiFi," he said.

"At Gold Coast Airport we have seen 9,000 connections through Eduroam in the past month which reflects the high demand for this service.

"Working with AARNet we are helping them achieve a goal to enable education anytime, anywhere."

AARNet CEO Chris Hancock said expanding Eduroam beyond the campus to public places such as airports provided a valuable service for researchers and students when they are travelling.

"Eduroam was established specifically to meet the global roaming needs of the research and education sector and is now available on campuses and in public places in more than 76 countries," he said.

"Eduroam has been available at several airports in Europe for a few years now and we're thrilled to be partnering with Queensland Airports Limited and the universities to make the service available to staff and students from across Australia and around the world at Gold Coast and Townsville airports."

Southern Cross University Vice Chancellor Professor Adam Shoemaker said he was thrilled with the outcomes of the partnership being forged.

"Looking towards the future, QAL and Southern Cross University hope to build on the Eduroam relationship by interconnecting both organisations using high speed network connections which can facilitate research opportunities in collaboration with the University's IT and Digital Business degrees," he said.

James Cook University Head of ICT Infrastructure Services Swain Kirk said access to the Eduroam service further extended students' capacity to access core subject material using their University credentials.

"This extends to all students whose universities align with the Eduroam service. JCU sees this as a great step forward as a large number students and staff use Townsville Airport on a regular basis. Access enables both to maximise use of the time spent in the airport lounges," he said.

Eduroam allows students and staff of participating universities to login, with their usual user name and password, to a secure wireless network at more than 12,000 locations worldwide.

When connected to Eduroam, students and staff can access their university intranet and emails, watch lectures and use resources that are usually only available on-campus.

The establishment of an Eduroam network follows research from Speedtest which shows Gold Coast Airport's free WiFi is the fastest of Australia's six busiest airports.

Gold Coast Airport recorded an average download speed of 80.73 megabits per second, faster than any of the airports analysed by Speedtest around the world, and faster than National Broadband Network (NBN) speeds.

"This shows that we're ahead of the pack in terms of IT network infrastructure which is an important part of ensuring our customers have a positive experience while at the airport," Mr Mills said.

A planned upgrade to Townsville Airport's WiFi will be implemented in coming months to deliver faster speeds for users.

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

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