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**MEDIA RELEASE**

**STRONG LOADS OFFSET REDUCED CAPACITY**

Queensland Airports Limited welcomed almost 700,000 passengers through its four ports in September.

The result represents a collective decline of 3.4 per cent for the group, which includes the Gold Coast, Townsville, Mount Isa and Longreach airports.

A summary of September results is provided in the table below:

<b>September results</b>			
	<b>September 2018</b>	<b>September 2017</b>	<b>Growth</b>
Gold Coast	536,021	552,105	-2.9%
Townsville	139,985	147,453	-5.1%
Mount Isa	16,721	17,190	-2.7%
Longreach	3,066	3,305	-7.2%
<b>Total passengers</b>	<b>695,793</b>	<b>721,053</b>	<b>-3.4%</b>

QAL CEO Chris Mills said the reduced number of airline seats was the key reason for the drop in passenger numbers.

“Capacity across the group was down 5.9 per cent, however loads were almost 80 per cent,” Mr Mills said.

“If we look at domestic capacity on the Gold Coast, we can see it was down three per cent, but loads were 87 per cent.

“It reflects the fact airlines are tightly managing their fleet but demand is still there.”

Mr Mills said based on available figures, capacity could be flat for the rest of the year and into early 2019.

Mr Mills said the cessation of Tigerair’s Townsville-Melbourne service was being felt, but if this was factored out, passenger movements had grown 3.2 per cent in Townsville in September.

“We also had a boost in capacity and passengers on our Sydney route in the last weekend of September last year, when the Cowboys played in the NRL grand final,” he said.

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“We didn’t see that this year unfortunately, which resulted in 24 per cent fewer passengers on that weekend.”

Mount Isa Airport experienced a slight decline of fewer than 500 passengers in September, but continues to perform well, coming off 19 consecutive months of growth.

“The good news for Mount Isa is that Qantas is returning its 737 aircraft to the region, bringing better and more reliable aircraft, and additional capacity.”

About 240 fewer passengers flew through Longreach Airport in the month, despite capacity remaining largely unchanged.

Tigerair Australia recommenced its Gold Coast to Hobart service from October 30, and both Virgin Australia and AirAsia X have confirmed additional capacity for the Gold Coast during the holiday period.

**ENDS.**

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