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**MEDIA RELEASE**

**WARM WELCOME TO THE TOURISM INDUSTRY’S NIGHT OF NIGHTS**

Queensland Airports Limited is welcoming Queensland’s top tourism awards back to the Gold Coast, the home of tourism in the state.

Queensland Airports Limited, which owns and operates Gold Coast, Townsville, Longreach and Mount Isa airports, is the presenting partner of the glittering Queensland Tourism Awards ceremony tonight.

Queensland Airports Limited Chief Executive Officer Chris Mills said it was great to see the Queensland Tourism Awards return to the Gold Coast – some nine years since the event was last held here.

“It’s fantastic to welcome the state’s top tourism operators to the home of tourism in the state,” Mr Mills said.

“This has been a huge year for tourism, particularly on the Gold Coast where we hosted the biggest sporting event Australia will see this decade, the 2018 Commonwealth Games. So, it is perfect timing for the Queensland Tourism Awards to be here.”

Mr Mills said the partnership between Queensland Airports Limited and the Queensland Tourism Awards stretched back 12 years because of its importance for the company.

“Our airports are gateways to Queensland but tourists would not visit without the exceptional destinations and attractions managed by our tourism industry,” he said.

“Together, we are committed to delivering the best experience possible for visitors and wish all entrants in this year’s awards the best of luck.”

Queensland Tourism Industry Council Chief Executive Daniel Gschwind said 2018 had been a big year for the Gold Coast.

“With major events like the Commonwealth Games and The Logies, as well as tourism events like DestinationQ and the Queensland Tourism Awards being held on the Gold Coast this year, the region is successfully stepping up and assuming its role as the traditional centre of Queensland’s tourism universe,” he said.

“We are pleased to be bringing the Queensland Tourism Awards back to the Gold Coast after nine years and are grateful for the support of presenting partner Queensland Airports Limited in making this happen. With great infrastructure, like Gold Coast Airport, it’s easy to see why this destination continues to evolve successfully as a powerful drawcard for domestic and international travellers alike.”

Queensland recorded an almost five per cent increase in domestic visitors (to 22.5 million) last financial year, a four per cent increase in international visitors (to 2.7 million), and an overall increase in visitor spending to reach almost \$23 billion.

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