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MEDIA RELEASE

REDUCED AIRLINE CAPACITY CONTINUES TO IMPACT NUMBERS

Queensland Airports Limited (QAL) welcomed a total of 679,952 passengers through its four ports in November, with reduced capacity in the larger ports.

The result represents a collective decline of 2.7 per cent in passenger numbers for the group, which includes the Gold Coast, Townsville, Mount Isa and Longreach airports.

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

November results			
	November 2018	November 2017	Growth
Gold Coast	526,283	544,012	-3.3%
Townsville	133,952	134,997	-0.8%
Mount Isa	17,030	16,895	0.8%
Longreach	2,687	2,566	4.7%
Total passengers	679,952	698,470	-2.7%

QAL CEO Chris Mills said passenger numbers across the four ports in November reflected the ongoing reduction in capacity and increasing loads.

“Increased load factors have been the story lately, with less seats available,” Mr Mills said.

“This is most marked for us on the Gold Coast, where domestic routes are showing an average load of 89 per cent. That is a high benchmark and shows just how tightly the airlines are managing their fleets and how popular the Gold Coast is as a destination.

“There aren’t many spare seats on planes flying in or out of the Gold Coast.”

Mr Mills said a similar trend was being seen across the country.

“The October report from the Bureau of Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Economics (BITRE) shows a 1.2 per cent decrease in aircraft trips across Australia compared to October 2017, despite the total number of passengers flying during the month increasing by 2.5 per cent,” Mr Mills said.

On the Gold Coast, passenger numbers dropped 3.3 per cent, but aircraft loads continued to climb to an average of 84.5 per cent across all services, and most notably on domestic services where loads averaging 89 per cent were recorded.

Similar patterns were recorded at QAL's second busiest port of Townsville, where passenger numbers remained relatively steady, dipping just 0.8 per cent. However, average aircraft loads at Townsville were recorded at 70.7 per cent – up from 66.3 per cent last year – a high percentage for a regional port.

It was a different story for Mount Isa and Longreach, with both ports recording healthy increases in passengers during November.

At Mount Isa, passenger numbers rose 0.8 per cent to 17,030 passengers, with the Cloncurry and Cairns services performing particularly well.

At Longreach, passenger numbers jumped 4.7 per cent.

The figures come as Gold Coast Airport is gearing up for its busiest time of the year, with Virgin Australia, AirAsia X and Air New Zealand confirming additional capacity for the airport during the holiday period.

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