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**MEDIA RELEASE**

**STRONG LOAD FACTORS CONTINUE DESPITE DIP IN PASSENGER NUMBERS**

More than 651,200 passengers passed through Queensland Airports Limited's (QAL) four airports in March 2019.

This represents a 7.6 per cent downturn for the group, with fewer passengers at Gold Coast, Townsville, Mount Isa and Longreach airports reflective of a declining trend in passenger numbers across Australia and ongoing capacity constraints by the airlines.

A summary of March's results is provided in the table below:

<b>March 2019 results</b>			
	<b>2019</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>Change</b>
Gold Coast	501,907	542,569	-7.5%
Townsville	129,725	141,703	-8.5%
Mount Isa	17,106	17,428	-1.8%
Longreach	2,474	2,834	-12.7%
<b>Total passengers</b>	<b>651,212</b>	<b>704,545</b>	<b>-7.6%</b>

QAL CEO Chris Mills said lower passenger numbers at Gold Coast Airport were a result of reduced flights and seating capacity offered by the airlines, but aircraft loads remained the highest in the country.

"The average load of aircraft using Gold Coast Airport increased to 84.2 per cent during March – the highest in the country," he said.

"In fact, our two busiest routes in Gold Coast-Sydney and Gold Coast-Melbourne continue to record the highest loads of any route in Australia, showing passenger demand for the destination remains strong."

Latest figures from the Bureau of Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Economics (for February 2019), show the Gold Coast-Sydney route recorded the highest load factor of any route in Australia during February, with a 90.5 per cent load average. The Gold Coast-Melbourne route came in second with a load factor of 88.2 per cent.

Mr Mills said the downward trend in passenger numbers at the company's four airports was reflective of a slide in domestic passengers across Australia.

“The number of passengers flying domestically has dipped across Australia in the past three months,” he said.

“Latest figures released by the Bureau of Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Economics (BITRE) show passenger numbers fell 0.7 per cent in February 2019 – the third consecutive monthly decrease. We haven’t seen a decline like this since October 2015.”

**Media contact:**

Corporate Relations, Queensland Airports Ltd P: (07) 5589 1414 or E: [media@qldairports.com.au](mailto:media@qldairports.com.au)