

MEDIA RELEASE

GOLD COAST AIRPORT CALLS FOR CLARITY ON BORDER REOPENING

Passenger numbers declined significantly across Queensland Airports Limited's (QAL) four ports in April.

QAL owns and operates the Gold Coast, Townsville, Mount Isa and Longreach airports, which were collectively down more than 97 per cent on April 2019.

QAL CEO Chris Mills said passenger numbers had dropped significantly following government travel restrictions and the Queensland border closure.

The decrease was most acute for QAL's largest port, Gold Coast Airport, which recorded less than 2,000 passengers for the month. This compared to the 560,000 passengers recorded in April 2019.

"Three return services per week are operating from Gold Coast Airport currently," Mr Mills said.

"This compares to 420 flights per week prior to restrictions."

Mr Mills is confident that holiday makers will flood back into Queensland – but it depends when the Queensland border is re-opened and travel restrictions have eased.

"Current research suggests there is pent up demand for travel to Queensland, particularly coming into winter. The Gold Coast is the perfect destination - but no-one knows when they can start to book that holiday," he said.

"The Gold Coast-Sydney and Gold Coast-Melbourne routes were two of the busiest in the country – as soon as southern travellers can visit Queensland again, it will be a huge shot in the arm for tourism operators and the state's economy.

"We're not saying the border should be opened tomorrow – we all understand that the health considerations are the first priority, and the government has done well to manage this. But we need a clear date to work towards – so the airlines can sell seats, travellers can make bookings, and tourism businesses can get the income they desperately need."

Mr Mills said it was understandable that international travel could take some time to be re-established, which reinforced the need to get interstate travel happening. He also supported the Federal Government's intention to consider opening up trans-Tasman travel earlier.

ENDS.

Media contact: QAL Corporate Relations (07) 5589 1414 or media@qldairports.com.au.