

## Queensland Airports Limited



Providing an enjoyable airport experience for domestic and international travellers is certainly no easy feat, but it's exactly what Queensland Airports Limited (QAL) strives to accomplish. While hosting 33,000 passengers monthly and 2,500 employees at its four airports located in the Gold Coast, Townsville, Mt. Isa, and Longreach, QAL's number one priority is "providing the right things to enhance customer experience and to ensure the passing time spent at the airport will be remembered." Joseph Kairouz, the Head of Networks and Security, relies on the Meraki wireless access points to provide that exact experience QAL's passengers.

*"We're trying to create a fun journey for the customer, from start to finish, and that's what we're very focused on."*

—Joseph Kairouz, Networks and Security at QAL

As the demand for customer data and rates of engagement increased, the IT team at QAL realised that they needed to find a solution that would serve guests while capturing important data that could be used to better the airport experience and aid marketing strategy. Today, 70+ Meraki MR Access Points are used around the corporate offices, located at the Gold Coast airport, as well as the terminals at all four sites.

Kairouz's IT team of 10 sit together in an open office space in order to keep ideas flowing and to stay engaged with other teams like marketing, who use the WiFi analytics data in the Meraki dashboard to help make engagement decisions. With the previous WiFi solution, the team experienced a lack of innovative features. In addition, there was no analytical data that could be easily exported. When an IT team member discovered Cisco Meraki, the solution quickly stood out due to its usability and visibility of rich data. "We needed the data fast," Kairouz said.

Once the 70+ MR wireless APs were purchased, the team worked with a few consultants to complete a site survey, configure, and install all of the APs. It was crucial to the team that they utilised the right algorithm to place the APs in the right spaces, allowing analytics to be captured correctly based on a triangulation approach. All in all, the deployment took just one week across the four sites.

Today, the QAL team relies on the wireless network for their day-to-day responsibilities and operations, while also beginning to use it for the live interactive displays located throughout the terminals. As settings are cloned between sites, the staff WiFi experience is consistent as employees travel from one location to another.

*"It's flawless. I don't have any concerns or any issues."*

—Joseph Kairouz, Networks and Security at QAL

With free guest WiFi and an open network, guests have the ability to browse at 120 mb per second, allowing them to do everything from casual browsing to downloading music and movies, with the latter taking up 10.6% of traffic. While many businesses limit the number of minutes guests have access to free WiFi, QAL created an SSID that allows for unlimited usage. The staff at the airports continue to receive compliments on how great the wireless is, now that the new Meraki solution is in place.

The IT team now has visibility into device types, and consistently use the location analytics feature in the dashboard to see which areas have the highest foot traffic, thus knowing how to better position and market products. Even with the strong digital trend worldwide, QAL is trying to do more to market their free WiFi service by challenging guests to use it and experience the simple sign-on process through the splash page or social media. "I know from my own experience that when I only get 15 minutes of WiFi, it frustrates me because you're trying to rush to get things done. The airport is essentially a gateway, where we allow people to use it [WiFi] freely, and we get the benefits."

Though the airport wireless network is in place and running smoothly, the team has big future plans with the Meraki solution up their sleeves. The team is looking to deploy 10-15 outdoor wireless APs in the car park areas, using solar power to support them, thus creating a meshed network. In addition, they plan to introduce Bluetooth features into the wireless network to get information on smart watches and their usage to determine if the team should stock some as part of the airport retail offering. The team is also trialling MV Security Cameras to provide an additional layer of data with its heat maps feature. MX Security Appliances will be deployed shortly to help the organisation simplify VPN connections. All of the additions will make QAL more data-driven and help the IT and marketing teams make even wiser decisions when it comes to improving customer experiences.