



Queensland Symphony Orchestra musicians Chris Hudson, Thomas Allely, Lauren Manuel, Ashley Carter and Richard Madden at Brisbane Airport. Picture: Nigel Hallett

## BRISBANE'S NEW RUNWAY IS CLEARED FOR TAKEOFF

### DAN KNOWLES

BRISBANE'S new \$1.1 billion parallel runway opens Sunday, with the first flights using what is set to become the east coast of Australia's most efficient air

hub and creating tens of thousands of jobs.

BAC chief executive Gert-Jan de Graaff said COVID had shrunk plans for the official opening but the airport would still be celebrating with the

Queensland Symphony Orchestra to perform on the runway before the first departure, a Virgin flight to Cairns.

"COVID may have hampered some of our plans

to mark this historic moment but, it certainly has not detracted from our pride and sense of accomplishment," Mr de Graaff said.

The new parallel runway means huge capacity

increases, with projections passenger numbers will double from 24 million to 50 million in the next 20 years and the number of direct employees soaring from 24,000 to almost 50,000.

The global COVID pandemic has crippled flights numbers, slashing more than 90 per cent from international flights, but domestic flights are slowly creeping back.